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Economic and Social
Council

Topic A: Modulation Of Youth
Access to Firearms

Economic and Social Council

Topic A: Modulation to Access to Firearms



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Introduction to the Committee

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a United Nations organ dedicated to focus on the main divisions of sustainable development, which are the economic, social, and environmental aspects, as well as the promotion of better life quality, full employment, and the economic and social progress of nations. The ECOSOC also hosts United Nations (UN) major conferences and summits, constituting an important stakeholder since its establishment in 1945 as one of the six main organs of the UN. Topics debated in ECOSOC may vary from intergovernmental discussions of major global issues to the implementation of programs that influence people's lives.

Introduction to the Topic

The modulation of youth access to firearms is a topic discussed all around the world and can be described as the regulation of firearms for people - according to the UN (2008) - between 15 and 24 years of age approximately, since this range can vary from country to country. It is important to remark "youth" as a specific social group because it can be well explained as a transition period from parental dependency to adult independence, also constituting the departure from compulsory education to the entrance into a formal job.

A firearm is defined as "a weapon from which a shot is discharged by gunpowder" (Merriam Webster, 2021). The act of possessing and using firearms is a subject with different perspectives around the world, influenced

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by each country's history. This directly influences their gun legislation, allowing, regulating, or forbidding their purchase, use, open or concealed carry, etc.

Gun violence is a global issue in which individual security is threatened by a violent act involving a firearm. This issue can include intended or caused harm and even homicide, violating the right to life. Related to firearm interaction, the term "gun culture" can be described as a pattern of feelings and/or thoughts that view guns as a symbol of security, control, respect, or even personal value, subconsciously shaping behavior into a perspective in which the firearm owner feels "empowered" by the weapon. In some countries, the presence of gun culture has influenced the way youths act or think under different circumstances. The fact that this age range has adapted to gun culture in many places around the world constructs a situation in which firearms are not known to be a responsibility, possibly endangering people as a result of improper or reckless use.

Why is it a problem? The easy access to firearms is a situation that can become a problem given that firearms have a high harm capacity that can cause dangerous situations to collective security. Regarding youth, access of this social group to firearms can pose a risk to the people they interact with or even to themselves. Moreover, it is important to remark that "youth" includes legal minors, who in many countries are forbidden to acquire firearms.

Youth access to firearms can pose a threat even in countries with legislation against their procurement, mainly because their illegal acquisition means that the respective government has no knowledge about it; therefore no background check is made to the purchaser as means of knowing whether the owner has any criminal convictions or psychological issues that can be

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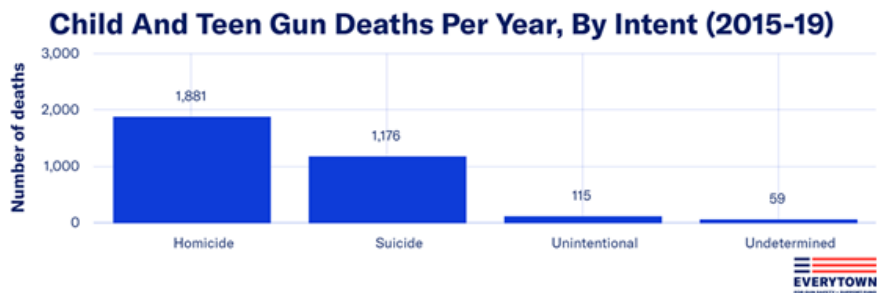
prejudicial, not only for their security and health, but also for the people around them.

Policies around the world. There are different legal perspectives regarding firearms in many countries. On one hand, there are countries that allow civilian access to firearms, and although some countries might have more civilian firearms, only three to date protect the right to keep and bear arms in their constitutions. These countries are the United States, Mexico, and Guatemala, places where this right is part of their constitution, meaning access to guns cannot be forbidden, only regulated. On the other hand, there are countries that support the limitation of these weapons to provide security, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan. These three countries have forbidden several kinds of firearms; the first two have mainly taken these kinds of measures because of previous issues that attempted against the security of their people, while Japan does not often have similar events as most citizens do not see a need for firearms.

As it was previously mentioned, gun policies around the world can defend or dislike the regulation of firearms depending on their context. Countries that defend or promote civilian access to these weapons can encourage gun culture in their populations; therefore legislations regarding regulations can be complicated to implement. As for countries in favor of the restrictions on firearms, the implementation of regulations can be used to promote safety and for the authorities to have more awareness regarding the gun market. Nevertheless, these countries might have to bend their existing policies on some occasions to get to an ideal legislation or solution.

Complementing graphic aids. The following information will be presented along with statistics that show data graphically. Youth deaths can often be related to firearms.

Graph A. In 2016, the United States led the list of firearm youth deaths worldwide, representing 15% of the total number of child deaths. Of all firearm children and teen deaths, 58% were homicide and 36% were suicide (Everytown, 2021).

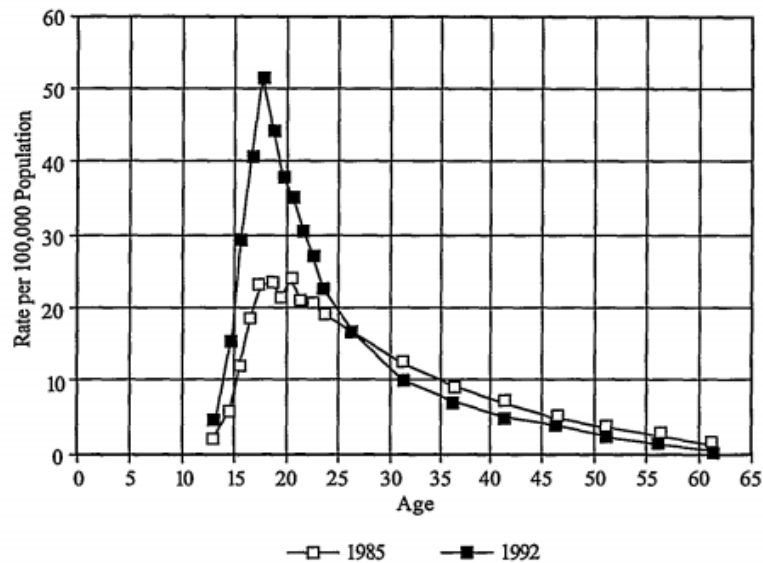


Graph B. Regarding children’s exposure to violence, research made in 2014 shows how the percentage can vary according to age, tending to increase with it. Children who witness violence tend to develop problems such as anxiety and depression, or externalized behaviors such as fighting, lying, bullying, and even disobedience at home and school. They also have difficulties with social interactions or even academic performance. Victims tend to develop violent behavior as means of solving problems (Child trends, 2014).

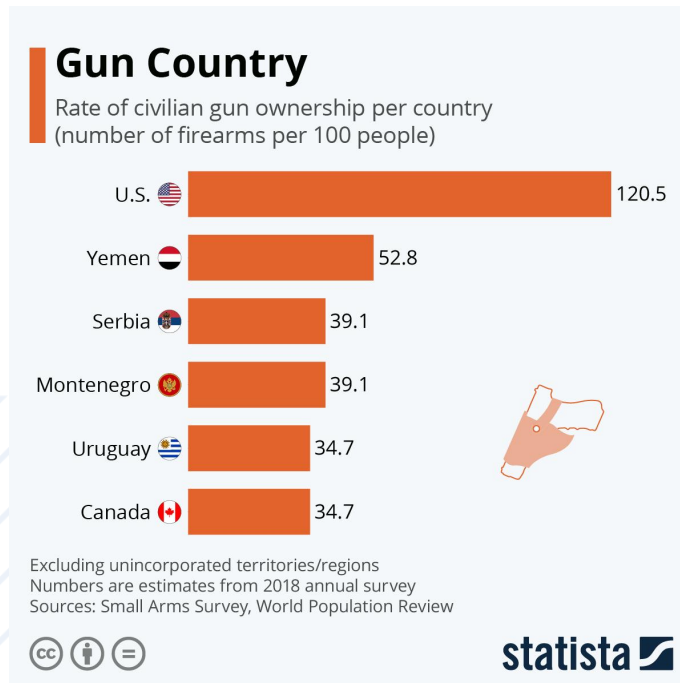


Graph C. To compare past trends, this graphic shows the United States murder arrest rate per 100,000 population of the years 1992 and 1985. In the graphic it can be seen that youth numbers have increased dramatically in the 7-year period (Blumstein, 1995).

Figure 3b
Age-Specific Murder Arrest Rate
1985 and 1992



Graph D. Although there are many countries with civilian gun ownership, there are some countries that have more firearms. For example, in the year 2020, the United States was the first country in the rate of greater gun ownership; followed by Yemen, with less than a half the first number; then Serbia and Montenegro, with 32% of the United States’s total number; and finally Uruguay and Canada, with a rate of 34.7 firearms per 100 people (Statista, 2020).



Historical background

According to BBC (2014), in World War I around 250,000 people under the age of 18 served in the British armed forces even though that was the minimum age to enlist. Something similar happened in World War II; since men in their twenties had to enlist in the military, several teenagers faked their age so they would be allowed to fight.

United States National Firearms Act. Originally, the NFA was introduced in 1934 and required people who made and transferred firearms established by the act to pay special taxes. These tariffs also applied to people or organizations who were in the business of manufacturing, importing, and dealing with NFA firearms such as rifles and shotguns that with barrels less

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than 18 inches in length, firearms that can be described as “any other weapons”, machine guns, and firearm mufflers and silencers. A registration with the Secretary of Treasury was also required.

Mass school shootings before Columbine.

- May 28, 1975. Ontario, Canada. Two people dead, thirteen injured, the perpetrator killed himself.
- February 2, 1996. Moses Lake, Washington. Three people dead and one injured.
- February 19, 1997. Bethel, Alaska. Two people dead and two injured.
- October 1, 1997. Pearl, Mississippi. Two people dead at the school and the perpetrator’s mother at home, seven injured.
- May 21, 1998. Springfield, Oregon. Four people dead in total, two students and the perpetrator’s parents, 25 injured.

Columbine shooting. On April 20, 1999, students Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, carrying firearms and bombs, opened fire inside Columbine high school at approximately 11:19 a.m.. According to investigations, they arrived in separate cars around 11:10 and placed two bags with a 20-pound propane bomb that was set to explode at 11:17 in the cafeteria; by 11:35, 12 students and a teacher had been murdered. Around 20 more people were injured before the perpetrator’s committed suicide around 12:00 p.m.

Investigators claimed that they had been planning on bombing the school since 1998. Eric had threatened a student the year before and had posted online that he would like to murder people. The man who sold the weapons to Dylan was arrested and served a 6 year sentence in prison.

Child soldiers. The annual report in 2010 said that around 16 armed forces in conflicts from Philippines and Myanmar to the Democratic Republic of Congo

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have recruited children since 2005 to use as spies or soldiers. Here is a list of the groups that was reported to be the most persistent recruiters:

- Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)
- Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)
- Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC)/including fast-track integrated units of the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) formerly led by Laurent Nkunda and Bosco Ntaganda
- Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR)
- Front nationaliste et integrationaliste (FNI)
- Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)
- Karenni Army (KA)
- Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)
- Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)
- Mai-Mai groups in North and South Kivu, including among others PARECO
- Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)
- New People's Army (NPA)
- Pro-government militias in Darfur
- Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)
- Tatmadaw Kyi
- Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG)

Consequences. Children see war differently than adults do since they are in a growing phase and have different needs. When a child is recruited, they experience things that may impact the rest of their lives. Some of them get sick because of malnutrition, not having access to clean water, or poor housing conditions. A number of child soldiers become disabled and don't

have access to good healthcare or rehabilitation. It has psychological consequences, such as posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, etc. There is a huge possibility of raping and prostitution that leads to an exposition to sexually-transmitted diseases.

Middle-East armed conflicts and Somalia. Some schools were used as recruitment centers in Somalia, with two groups openly recruiting children as young as 9 years old to participate in the armed conflict. Somalia's prime minister said that their policy was to do everything to prevent child recruitment but no progress has been made. Other reports state that children under the age of 15 were recruited for the Yemen civil war.

Youths in organized crime. Places such as one of the epicenters of organized crime, Ciudad Juarez in Mexico, are perfect to recruit young men to be part of organized crime. 80% of the people recruited are under the age of 25 because groups think the older they are the more they think; this type of people are called the "Sicaritos", referencing the diminutive for hitman in Spanish.

Evolution of the problem. There have been a variety of school shootings after Columbine: two school shootings in Germany, one in 2006 with 32 injured and one death, and another one in 2009 with 15 deaths; and multiple others in the US, some inspired by the events of 1999.

Current Relevance

The easy access to firearms is a problem among all nations as previously detailed. Around 70% of youth homicides in the Americas involved a firearm, while globally the rate is above 40%. Many studies have been made by the UN, showing for example, that 45% of "stray bullet" victims (non-intended victims of an intended shot) in Latin America were younger than 18 years of

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age. Another study, applied in 2005 to seven developed countries (Estonia, Israel, Francophone, Macedonia, Portugal, Latvia, and the United States), shows that 10-21% of boys and 2-5% of girls had carried weapons the previous month, and although the most common was a knife, the United States showed that nearly 25% of these children had carried a firearm.

More than 875 million weapons are in circulation worldwide, with 75% of them in the possession of non-military related individuals. There are 253 million (39%) more weapons than passenger cars. Every year, approximately eight million new small arms are produced, along with between 10 and 15 billion rounds of ammunition, and the approved foreign trade in small arms and ammunition totals more than US\$7.1 billion.

Young people's involvement in the most severe types of violence is linked closely to the convergence and interaction of personal, familiar, peer, scholar, and community risk factors. The capacity of risk factors to increase the probability of youth violence is classified. There is no particular risk factor, or array of risk factors, that can reliably predict who may participate in violent behavior. However, the more personal, familiar, peer, scholar, and community risk factors a youth faces, the more likely they are to become involved in violence.

40% of gun sales today do not go through a background investigation because they are made online, at gun shows, or via classified ads. The debate over gun safety measures, including background checks, has erupted in the aftermath of mass shootings. Gun control is a divisive issue, and whether or not stringent gun control regulations can deter murders or suicides is a point of contention.

List of major shootings worldwide committed by youth

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- Rio de Janeiro School shooting in Realengo, Rio de Janeiro, 2011 (Wellington Oliveira, 23).
- Chardon High School shooting in Chardon, Ohio, 2012 (Thomas Lane, 17).
- Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, 2012 (Adam Lanza, 20).
- Toulouse and Montauban shootings in Toulouse, Garonne, 2012 (Mohammed Merah, 23).
- 2013 Santa Monica shooting in Santa Monica, California, 2013 (John Zawahri, 23).
- HCTC shooting in Hazard, Kentucky, 2013 (Dalton Stidham, 21).
- Marysville shooting in Marysville, Washington, 2014 (Jaylen Fryberg, 15).
- Isla Vista killings in Isla Vista, California, 2014 (Elliot Rodger, 22).
- IES Joan Fuster shooting in Barcelona, Catalonia, 2015 (Max Porta, 13).
- Umpqua Community College shooting in Roseburg, Oregon, 2015 (Christopher Harper-Mercer, 26).
- La Loche shooting in La Loche, Saskatchewan, 2016 (unnamed, 17).
- Colegio Americano del Noreste shooting in Monterrey, Nuevo León, 2017 (Federico Guevara Elizondo, 15).
- Goyases massacre in Goiânia, Goiás, 2017 (unnamed, 14).
- Santa Fe High School shooting in Santa Fe, Texas, 2018 (Dimitrios Pagourtzis, 17).
- Marshall County High School shooting in Benton, Kentucky, 2018 (Gabe Parker, 15).
- Kerch Polytechnic College attack in Kerch, Crimea, 2018 (Vladislav Roslyakov, 18).
- Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, 2018 (Nikolas Cruz, 19).
- Suzano School shooting in Suzano, São Paulo, 2019 (Guilherme Tauci Monteiro, 17).

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Statistics (cases, deaths and injuries). In 2012, guns were used in almost half of all murders committed around the world. Furthermore, according to a World Health Organization study on the global state of violence reduction, young people aged 10 to 29 account for 43 percent of annual homicides worldwide. Homicide affects young people overwhelmingly, regardless of the country's income level; nevertheless, the United States' youth homicide rate is higher than that of other high-income nations (eg, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom). The majority of violent victimizations by teenagers aged 12 to 17 in 2013 were simple attacks without the use of weapons. However, guns were the weapon of choice among youth who committed homicides with a weapon.

Guns were used in 71 percent of the 4,743 registered homicides committed by 12 to 24-year-olds with a weapon in 2014. In comparison, about 12% of crimes were committed with a knife, 6% with a personal weapon (e.g., hands, fists, feet), 8% with a different form (e.g., poison) or unspecified weapon, and only 3% were committed with a blunt instrument. In 2014, men made up more than 90% of all identified 12- to 24-year-olds who committed a murder with a gun. 70% of the 3,374 murders perpetrated by identified juveniles in the US involved African Americans, 27% involved white people, and 1% involved American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asians, or Pacific Islanders.

Involvement of youth in organized crime. In several nations, youth gangs have become a significant matter of tension for people as they are blamed for some of the acts of violence that happen in the area. However, it is advised to be cautious against making broad generalizations about the youth gang epidemic, noting that there are significant differences among gangs in the area, which are rapidly evolving. There are temporary, unorganized groups, such as community gangs with a limited number of members that practice violent attacks and petty theft; then there are sports fanatics that may become violent in some

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instances; and then there are gangs who are far more organized and aggressive, such as Central American gangs. There have also been instances where organized crime has enlisted the help of these youth gangs to carry out illegal activities.

The rise of gangs is linked to teenagers' socioeconomic backgrounds, their upbringing in a violent environment, and their exposure to rights violations and social exclusion. According to some sources, gangs function as “spaces” for interpersonal social interaction by providing a sense of community and belonging that they do not find elsewhere in society. Rejection and ostracism that teenagers and young people may encounter as a result of their financial, ethnic, or other circumstances are often related to violent behavior. Another aspect that encourages children and teenagers to pursue gangs is a lack of meaningful opportunities to spend free time in their families, such as cultural, social, or sports events.

Gangs often serve as self-defense systems against the abuse and pressures they encounter in their daily lives - at home, school, and in the community - which can be perpetrated by their friends, adults, or even government security agents. Many of the teenagers who join gangs have feelings of exclusion and resentment because they believe they are not taken seriously and are not given equal rights and opportunities; they feel abandoned by government agencies, which they believe are indifferent to their interests and needs arising from their circumstances.

Economic impact. Guns, gangs, alcohol, and narcotics have all been identified as significant enablers of youth violence, with access to arms also being unquestionably a huge enabler. Suicide is included in most assessments of the economic effects of gun abuse. The annual costs of firearm accidents globally are estimated to be \$100 billion a year, counting indirect costs such as

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improved surveillance and psychological assessment. Victims of juvenile crime incurred \$6.6 billion in expenses, including lost quality of life and efficiency. According to a study of the costs of crimes committed by minors, a typical juvenile crime costs the victim \$16,600 to \$17,700 in addition to \$44,000 in expenses to the criminal justice system. As these costs are added to the lost economic contributions of convicted inmates, the net cost to society of one youth returning to a life of crime ranges from \$1.9 million to \$2.6 million, according to calculations.

Attempts to end the issue. The UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the most critical global danger to firearm owners. The treaty encourages national record keeping requirements for “end users” of protected weapons (including guns) and recommends that national governments exchange that information, which is one of its most objectionable clauses. Furthermore, the ATT requires countries to base their weapons importation and exportation decisions on a trading partner’s ability to comply with the treaty’s criteria, potentially isolating the US from legal arms trade or forcing it to implement regulations that limit Second Amendment rights. During the drafting process, the NRA pushed hard for civilian gun ownership to be excluded from the treaty’s reach. Those proposals were dismissed, which means that US firearms policy could become a global concern and be currently under review, with protectionist measures if it fails to meet international standards.

Firearm-related deaths among children, youth suicides, and school shootings are all caused by easy access to weapons inside a household. Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws are a critical factor in minimizing firearm deaths among children. Adults who allow children unsupervised access to a firearm are subject to CAP laws, which incentivize secure storage of firearms. CAP regulations come in a wide range of forms. When a minor is expected to gain access to a weapon held irresponsibly, tougher laws enforce criminal

responsibility, regardless of whether the minor eventually gains access. The weaker ones only forbid such people from specifically supplying a weapon to a child, such as parents or guardians.

Countries that have taken action against this issue. The following are a few cases of countries that have implemented measures against easy access and ownership of guns.

Britain. Douglas Hurd, the British Home Secretary, looked into a shooting that occurred in 1987. The Firearms (Amendment) Act of 1988, signed by Margaret Thatcher's right-wing Conservative government, banned semi-automatic weapons and restricted the selling of some shotguns. Following a second shooting in 1997, the Firearms Act of 1997 restricted almost all firearm ownership. Owners of tens of thousands of firearms were contacted and offered a market value for their firearms. Police departments have been investigating illegal gun possession for years.

Australia. The Australian federal government, then headed by center-right Prime Minister John Howard, collaborated with states in 1996 to limit the possession of automatic and semi-automatic rifles and shotguns. The government was able to purchase over 650,000 weapons from their owners in almost twelve months. According to several statistics, the repurchase had positive results, and Australia became a less violent country in the years afterward.

New Zealand. After a shooting in 2019 by a 28-year-old man that opened fire on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 51 people with firearms including an AR-15-style rifle, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced that the nation's gun laws were to be updated in less than 24 hours. New Zealand had relatively stringent gun laws and strong gun lobbying in the past. In the

nation, which has a population of 5 million people, there were an estimated 250,000 gun owners. Brenton Harrison Tarrant, an Australian resident who'd already lived in New Zealand since 2017, had legally purchased his weapons but had unlawfully changed the serial numbers on some of them. In a matter of days, Adern was able to rally support for stricter gun regulations and placed interim legislation in place. The formal reforms were made the next month, with overwhelming bipartisan support and only one senator opposing them. A gun buy-back program, as well as limits on AR-15s and other semi-automatic weapons, were among the proposals.

Canada. Court documents revealed that the shooter was armed with two semi-automatic rifles and two handguns during a shooting in April 2020. He lacked a firearms license and some of the guns had been smuggled in from the US. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau placed a ban on over 1,500 “national guard assault weapons”, such as the AR-15 and Ruger Mini-14 like those used in a 1989 shooting that killed 14 people, two weeks after the incident. It makes firing, shipping, selling, importing, or bequeathing these arms illegal. Dating back to the disease outbreak, Trudeau, who campaigned for tougher gun control regulations, claimed that his government was working on more restrictions. The Conservative Party described the ban as opportunistic, as it was enforced by regulatory measures.

International Actions

It is currently understood that the best and most cost-effective place to prevent juvenile delinquency is as direct to its source as possible. Palliative care helps to deter criminal activity and promotes the growth of a young person's strengths and endurance. Although several prior methods have focused on addressing observable and long-term detrimental activity, data has proven that preventing and intervening during early stages is more successful.

Current studies have shown that delinquent behavior reduction services are a strong financial investment, in conjunction to social and individual gains and that the net benefits of successful preventive interventions outweigh their expenses. As per new data from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP), effective delinquency-prevention services will allow taxpayers to keep 7 to 10 dollars per each dollar invested due to lower imprisonment costs.

CAP laws (Child Access Prevention laws) hold a crucial role in reducing the number of students who carry a gun or weapon on school premises. These findings also show that when a CAP law is in effect, adolescents are less likely to be assaulted or wounded with a firearm on school grounds, or to skip school for concern of their wellbeing.

Organizations

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). Formed in 1920, the CWLA is a coalition between hundreds of public and private organizations. This organization counts with centers that focus on different aspects of Human Rights such as advocacy centers or practice excellence centers. They have been part of the CWLA's 2013 national conference where they opened up a space to listen about gun violence, they discussed the efforts to address this issue and recognized that are encountered in policy and practice fields.

Hands Without Guns. Public health and education campaign of the Educational Fund to End Handgun Violence (EFEHV), this is a communications firm seeking to fight gun violence by giving a forum to speak out to young people. It provides workshops to adults and teenagers of any community, a program from which they can address gun violence and have new

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opportunities to participate in positive social activities. The organization is centered on teaching people how to promote peace and a positive environment. They have created radio, television, newspaper, bus, billboards, and other advertisements to let people know about this campaign.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Centers for Disease Control is a public health agency and their role in gun control is focused on the subsidiary National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC). They have been leading authority in injuries and violence prevention for the past 30 years, preventing the use of firearms by contributing with data in order to inform action, using science to identify possible solutions, and encouraging collaboration between different sectors to label the problem.

Amnesty International. An international NGO that fights for Human Rights, this organization uses global activists who are specialized in issues related to gun trade. Their international legal experts are working in order to stop irresponsible gun supplies in courts. Amnesty International with other non-governmental NGO's support the campaign against gun trade between the UK and Yemen. They also supported a joint communication to the International Criminal Court in order to open an investigation into the role of European gun companies in aiding war crimes committed in Yemen.

Colleges and University research. The "Means Matter" research of Harvard University explains that adults may assume their firearms are sufficiently "locked" and therefore their kids will never use them in an attempted suicide, but evidence suggests that adults often disregard their child's experience in handling firearms. When asked separately from gun-owning parents that had reported that their children had never handled these weapons, 22% of the children said they had.

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Current findings led by Eric Sigel, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, examine how youth access to firearms is linked to increased mental disorders and criminal behavior. In an interview with NPR's Robert Siegel, the following was stated:

We found that 20 percent of youth reported having potential access to firearms. And then we asked a whole bunch of characteristics of those youth, including mental health characteristics, violence characteristics. And we found that for those youth who report increased potential access to firearms, that several factors predicted that, including several of the violence characteristics, being physically aggressive as well as mental health associations (Sigel, 2017). Rebecca Cunningham, interim vice president for research at the University of Michigan, led an evaluation that found that when paired with the provision of free gun safes, parental involvement throughout a health care visit tends to improve appropriate firearm storage, particularly in cases of adolescents who have overcome a psychotic episode. The effect of humanitarian efforts to distribute gun safes on responsible firearm storage has been demonstrated, but the effectiveness on real firearm incident prevalence among youth is unclear.

When adolescents practice communication skills, educational strategies aimed at preventing unmonitored gun use youth hold improvement, but the consequences outside of school remain uncertain. The researchers discovered that educational systems focused on "scare tactics" among teenagers lacked substantiation. The adaptation of successful juvenile crime reduction strategies to concentrate on mitigating gun accidents among youth is a suggested next move.

Government policies.

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United States of America. The Second Amendment of the Constitution (1787) says “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed”. However, people who are under the age of 18, convicted criminals, mentally disabled people, and others are excluded from this Amendment..

Yemen. The possession of a firearm is permitted; automatic, semi-automatic, and handguns are permitted with a license; and rifles are regulated by law. People need to be at least 18 years old to own a gun, must not have criminal records or a history of mental disease or addiction.

Mexico. The 10th article of the Constitution (1917) establishes that people can own a gun only if they are licensed. Some of the requirements to obtain a license are complete military service, no physical or mental impediments, no criminal records, and proving they have a good reason to carry a gun.

Cyrus. This country is in the top 4 of possession of guns for every 100 people. Criminal rates, however, are low. To get a gun, people must be at least 18 years old, have a license, and a reason why they want to possess the weapon.

Switzerland. Gun control laws became stricter when the militiamen started to hurt themselves or others with their guns. The country established controls where they had to check if any other member of the militia had a criminal record or was likely to hurt themselves or others.

UN Actions

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The UN has played an important role throughout the history of this situation. The 2030 agenda was established on January 1, 2016, creating a group of 17 goals called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) is part of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and acts as secretariat for the program, which proposes solutions to different aspects of human development, including different matters such as education, climate change and energy, among others. SDG number 16 proposes peace, justice and strong institutions; a wide range of alternatives have been implemented to ensure this goal. More specifically, SDG 16.2 strives for the end of all kinds of violence against children, and SDG 16.4 seeks to reduce illicit firearms traffic significantly by 2030.

ECOSOC has been an active party regarding resolutions and proposals for the involvement of children in gun-related matters. This UN organ was requested to recommend solutions and decisions to the General Assembly (GA) in May 2019. ECOSOC suggested in draft resolution VI (point 24) to request support from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), respect local legislations, and prevent children's involvement in armed conflicts. By preventing this involvement, children are less likely to follow gun culture; therefore violence caused by these weapons can be reduced, striking a key point.

Another action taken by the UN is the Gun-free zone program of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), established in 2013. Its main goal is to focus on both short and long-term solutions to reduce gun violence, like restricting firearms in specific places to decrease the possibility of any act of gun violence. These places are called "Gun Free Zones" (GFZs). The implementation of GFZs can make social spaces safer and improve security regarding the now reduced chance of gun violence. GFZs are a viable

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alternative to decrease urban gun violence in countries where it happens frequently. For example, they have been implemented in El Salvador, South Africa, and Colombia, or places where gun violence has occurred, such as Sierra Leone or the Solomon Islands.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) established a program to prevent and reduce armed violence in Latin America and the Caribbean among children and teenagers. The program mainly focuses on five areas of youth gun violence to widely solve the problem, addressing key points, at the individual, local, regional, community, and national levels. By targeting these aspects, the UN ensures a better action to reduce the impact of gun violence in children and adolescents in the short term and a culture free of armed violence against youth in the long term.

As for the World Health Organization (WHO), in November 2020, the justice sector of the global child health agenda was established to reduce access and misuse of firearms. It states that, before a purchase process, safe storage requirements and background checks must be done. The global child health agenda will also be working with UNICEF because of children’s rights and matters. This agenda is complementary to achieve the SDGs, as it focuses on children and teens specifically and how the goals will be performed and affect these groups of society.

Points to Discuss

1. Context

- a. What are the risks that come with youth access to firearms?
- b. How has the government been involved with youth access to firearms?
- c. Supporting actions to modulate youth access to firearms

- d. New proposals to address youth access to firearms
- e. Children born into belic conflict areas
 - i. Child soldiers
 - ii. Families exposed to gun violence as something normal

2. Repercussions

- a. Impact on economy
 - i. Benefit from the expansion of the gun industry
 - ii. Indirect impact in social and security programmes
- b. Rights endangered by the availability of firearms
 - i. Right to live: casualties and deaths arisen from gun violence
 - ii. Right to freedom: Imprisonments and sentences as consequence of gun violence crimes
 - iii. Right to safety: Increasing violence rates and involvement of youth in life-endangering situations
 - iv. Right to health: Physical and mental health issues
 - Right to education: Increasing fear and tension that create an unsafe educational environment
- c. Addressing the biased situation in regards the people involved in gun violence and gun culture
 - i. Ethnic groups and minorities presenting greater involvement
 - ii. Participation of the male as the main aggressor in gun violence situations

3. Prevention

- a. What measures can be implemented in order to modulate youth access to firearms?
- b. Development of laws and other legislation to control access to firearms

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