"THIMUN Qatar is about empowering young people to make a difference in the world and their communities."
- Cameron Janzen founder of the Thimun Qatar
The American School of Kinshasa’s Model United Nations (MUN) chapter is dedicated to teaching students more about international relations, diplomacy, and public speaking on a global scale. By incorporating elements of both speechwriting and small group learning, MUN leaders have enabled delegates to be able to clearly and eloquently state their opinions when participating in a conference or in classroom discussions and debate.

The club, created to simulate the United Nations’ (UN) role as a supranational organization, focuses on creating solutions to global issues and alleviating conflicting national laws through the writing and proposal of resolutions. Resolutions require advanced critical thinking, public speaking, debate, research, and writing skills.

In order to develop these skills and help delegates put together thoughtful and coherent arguments, officers Makeda Y. Adefris and Mohamed Salman have created an efficient club schedule, allowing delegates to participate in activities from on-the-spot speech development (used to help delegates elaborate on their main points outside of planning periods), to researching the six main committees of the UN and physically connecting them to current international problems on webs. In addition, MUN homework assignments also help delegates retain the material learned during club meetings (usually functions of the UN and how they work to solve current global issues) and reinforces abstract concepts by showing their application to global problems.

More recently, MUN leaders asked delegates to write a one minute speech on current global events to present to small peer groups. Leaders were pleased with the amount of positivity the delegates responded with when critiqued, and are continually looking to build that positivity throughout members as they prepare for the upcoming 2016 THIMUN Qatar Conference.

By: Elisabeth Apanda

Illustration by, Alina Ali
Between all the seriousness and the ever growing hard work of our delegates: their policy statements and opening speeches, we can actually find a few drops of humour being passed around when they’re feeling a bit tired or bored with the issue at hand. As much as the provided issues can be interesting and thought provoking, those pick up lines can be entertaining with slight touches of cliche, which manage to make them both silly and fun.

Sitting with a few admins in the admins’ office, we got to know some of those pick up lines and they sure got us to crack some chuckles and laughs. Because the press team is not selfish with their sense of humor, we decided to share some of these pick up lines with you.

Ready? Here we go:

Did you fall from heaven? ’cause you blow me away. (The delegate must have fallen in love with the receiving delegate’s speech and therefore felt as if that delegate were a precious piece of heaven. Keep paying attention, delegate - you’re doing it good.)

Are you religious? ’cause you’re the answer to all of my prayers. (The issue that was at hand when the delegate sent this was probably concerning religious issues. We like the way you can connect things, delegate.)

I hope you know CPR ’cause you take my breath away. (The speech was probably too perfect and engaging that the delegate might have sent this note to the speech itself and not the delegate saying it.)

If I could rearrange the alphabet I’d put U and I together. (He definitely means putting the both of them in the same resolution group.)

If you were a burger at McDonald’s you’d be called McGorgeous. (Obviously, the delegate sending this note was too hungry to think of anything but food as a tool to compliment people with. Good try, delegate.)

It seems that our delegates can make the fun and best out of everything. From thrilling speeches and intense discussion to cheesy pick up lines, our delegates can be abnormally creative, which continues to fan the flames of our enthusiasm and keep us feeling all warm and fuzzy inside.

-Dema Abbas
Ambitious Admins

Admins work hard; whether they are passing notes, printing resolutions, answering a question, or running around the QNCC -- which is a challenge all on its own -- on one of the various missions their Chairs send them on. Admin work tirelessly to make sure THIMUN Qatar runs without a hitch. How do they feel about their work though? Do they enjoy it? Is it difficult? The Press Team interviewed several members of the Admin staff about their experiences.

People choose to be a part of Admin for a variety of reasons. Some find their jobs demanding but ultimately rewarding. “Ushering is really tiring, but I think it’s fun. It makes me feel good, helping people. I feel like admin is a very important role, and I think that without the admins the conference would not run well,” says Fatima Al Shaibani. Others, like Sultan Al Sulaiti, are interested in using this experience to learn about other aspects of MUN: “Because I want to become a delegate in the future, I want to know how the committees work, what the procedures are exactly: voting, objections, points of information... so that I will be aware of how delegates work and collaborate.”

Fatima, from GA4, says “I prefer being an admin much more than [being] a delegate. You get to move around...help out a lot, and I like that. My experience has been so memorable. I love being an admin.” Another Admin stated “Every experience I’ve had as an admin has been great! I really enjoy helping out as much as I can, to make [everyone’s] jobs easier. I also especially enjoy reading the funny notes people pass around.” Some enjoy global aspect of THIMUN: “I got to meet new faces from all around the gulf region and become friends with some of them,” says Sultan.

Admin are just as essential as delegates, chairs, and directors to the complicated process that is THIMUN. Although an Admin’s work may not seem very exciting or very complicated, they work immensely hard to make THIMUN run as smoothly as possible. “It’s a job that’s both enjoyable and challenging. Would I do it again? Of course!” - Sultan Al Sulaiti
Wonyong, South Korean, Qatar International School

- **What have you learned from your experience in THIMUN?**
  I have learnt that I can make new friends and I gained some confidence in talking in front of a lot of people.

- **How are you going to apply your knowledge when it is over?**
  When it comes to other conferences I will use my confidence and show what I can do.

- **Are you going to participate in THIMUN again?**
  Yes, of course.

- **Does THIMUN have a relation with your future career?**
  It doesn’t really tie into my future career, but when it comes to representing other works I think it will help. I want to do electronic engineering.

- **Do you have a most memorable experience that you want to share?**
  Meeting new people was the best experience. I met lots of people from different places.

Zaha, Canadian, Dubai International Academy

- **What have you learned from your experience in THIMUN?**
  It’s no good sitting, not doing anything because all the people, delegates and chairs, everyone is really friendly and it’s a really positive atmosphere to debate in. So it shouldn’t be that difficult to go up into a speech and even ask for points of information. I’ve been to other conferences and I’ve been a lot more consumed in my fear of speaking that here.

- **How are you going to apply your knowledge when it is over?**
  Even in class, for example, I will try to speak more and not be as shy.

Zeeshan Khalid, Pakistan, Wesgreen International School, Sharjah

- **What have you learned from your experience in THIMUN?**
  There is a lot. I learnt how to debate, new topics, issues of the world, how to be more confident. This is my first conference and it’s been pretty amazing.

- **How are you going to apply your knowledge when it is over?**
  I have something similar to MUN in my school as well, so I am definitely going to apply to that and since I have had the conference over here. It has helped me take the next step.

- **Does THIMUN have a relation with your future career?**
  I want to become a businessman. It can have a link because I can work in a field where I can finance...
Lois Akworkor Akuaku, Ghanaian, School: Mesaieed International School

- What have you learned from your experience in THIMUN?

During these three days of conference, I’ve learnt how to communicate with delegates and how to be confident in order to raise my placard and ask questions and go up to the podium to make a speech and go for and against a solution. I’ve learnt that people don’t take others’ points as important and think that theirs are better and only write down their own.

- How are you going to apply your knowledge when it is over?

I will apply the knowledge from THIMUN in my future career. I want to be a psychologist. I will be able to have confidence enough to speak to kids suffering and to their parents. Also, in terms of interviews I will make sure that my points are always good and to the point.

Samid Koch, British, Qatar Academy

- Are you going to continue with THIMUN?

I will try my best to be a chair next year, which will give me a higher position in the debate sessions. As a chair, I will be able to ask questions.

- How are you going to apply your knowledge when it is over?

I’m going to apply what I’ve learnt in THIMUN by taking it into the school environment and participate more in the class for better results.

- Does THIMUN have a relation with your future career?

I want to be a footballer, but you need social skills to be a footballer, so it kind of helps, but at the same time it doesn’t have a correlation.

Lois Akworkor Akuaku, Ghanaian, School: Mesaieed International School

- Do you have a most memorable experience that you want to share?

Actually, when we have some free time left over, some of my friends would complain that their Chairs aren’t that good, but I can easily say that our chairs are like the best. They are really cool and fun to hang out with. So I could say that that was really fun.

- What have you learned from your experience in THIMUN?

I’ve learnt that if you’ve got something in mind you should just get up and say it and you shouldn’t worry about what others have to say because, in the end, it’s for a better cause.

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Apart from recording crucial events, the Press team also has the crucial responsibility of raising the integral issues and bringing them to the light of the viewers. The immensity of this responsibility can be summed up succinctly in one question: Whatever I write will have the power to reach to the highest official and poorest layman, so what should I write?

This THIMUN '16, the press team embraced its ethical responsibility, raised imperative questions, and became the voice of people’s concerns. Read on to know our delegates’ responses to some of the vital questions raised:

Q. According to the UN aid chief on Tuesday, 25th of January 2016, the Syrian government in 2015 ignored the majority of the UN requests to deliver aid to some of the 4.6 million people in need of aid in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. Due to this the aid reached only 620,000 people in need. Why is this so?

Ans. Delegate of Syria, GA 3 (Social, Cultural and Humanitarian): Granting access in such sensitive times can be precarious. We believe that the UN is heavily influenced by Western powers and may use the access we grant them on our soil to further their own agenda. In times like these, loss of lives is expected; we deeply regret this.

Q. What does the USA consider as ‘non-conventional weapons’ in Syria? Can you explain your stance on this issue?

Ans. Delegate of USA, SC.: Chemical weapons, napalm, barrel bombs and nuclear weapons are non-conventional weapons. The USA stands against the use of non-conventional weapons everywhere not only in Syria.

Q. British foreign secretary, Philip Hammond, issued a statement claiming that Russian airstrikes against the Syrian opposition are helping the IS. And ever since the Russian plane was downed in Sinai in October, the strikes have increased, but “It is still only around 25 percent of the total of their air strikes, the remainder are targeted against the moderate opposition and that is deeply unhelpful to put it mildly.” Does Russia prioritize the issue of restoring political power to Bashar Al Assad by eradicating opposition over eradicating ISIS?

Ans. Delegate of Russia, SC: We are not prioritizing; our focus to eradicate the rebel forces was due to their use of non-conventional weapons. In fact, we just passed a clause to move our attention to combat the use of non-conventional weapons. Moreover, the rebel forces are larger and also causing civilian casualties. Hence, we are dedicating only the stated portion of our air strikes to ISIS.

Q. The USA has been criticized for not taking in enough refugees. What is your comment on this?

Ans. Delegate of USA, SC: The USA doesn’t want refugees in the country, but the USA is willing to provide aid and funding. Qatar is providing funding to the refugee intake in Turkey and the USA is willing to do the same thing, says the delegate of USA.

Q. Could you explain how the Paris attacks have affected the mindset of French people, and how it has affected France’s security policies?
Ans. Ambassador of France, GA 4: The people of France are paranoid of difference religions except Christianity as Christianity is the dominant religion in France. People are also paranoid about attending large, public events, therefore restrain themselves from going to populated areas. The Paris attacks opened the eyes of the French people and showed them how vulnerable they were. The government is improving security to prevent such an atrocity.

Q. Russia had a very strong response to the attacks in Paris. Could you explain why this attack was the tipping point that galvanized Russia into action like this?

Ans. Ambassador of Russia, SC: Through the Paris attacks ISIS showed their reach. They showcased their power as Paris is one of the safest places. Russia is one of the veto powers and we set an example to the world by our response. Russia has shown that ISIS cannot intimidate us, and that we will not bow to fear and terror.

Q. Campaign rhetoric in the United States has reached an unfortunate point to which it is threatening the resettlement of refugees. Why is it so and what is the U.S doing to combat the spreading sectarian fear?

Ans. Delegate of the U.S.A, HCR 1: U.S has many laws regarding refugees such as the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 which provides basic authority and guidance for the U.S government to aid refugees. American politicians are just concerned for the welfare of American citizens but they are also welcoming to give particularly skilled men and women job opportunities.

Q. Does China believe that educating children about climate change will help? And how does China plan to implement this?

Ans. Ambassador of China, GA 3: Climate change will pose greater havoc to the human race than any other issue. It has hence been recognised by the UN that the youth of today serve an instrumental role for the betterment of tomorrow’s generation. The ambassador of China plans to implement this by the establishment of a universal and unified curriculum that covers the education of environmental stability on a global scale. Informal education and increased community engagement will bring forth the necessary acknowledgement and action needed to promote environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the areas which have less access to education should also be targeted through the uniflux of voluntary campaigns by specialised experts in the field of study. Ideas of such are just the building blocks towards creating a better future.

Q. Russia is supporting the Houthi Rebels in Yemen. Could you explain why?

Ans. Ambassador of Russia, SC: Basically, in order for a rebel group to form and fight against the government, the government needs to be corrupt. Russia supporting the rebels is helping the Yemeni people to get rid of a corrupt government.
We’ve all heard this phrase, regurgitated by teachers standing with arms crossed, shooting invisible rays of condemnation. We sigh, roll our eyes, and huff a little, tired of hearing the same old comment thrown our way. My MUN advisor (shoutout to Mr Holliday!), has adopted this, both as a personal maxim and as a lesson to his students, even turning it into a hashtag plastered on the wall of his classroom for all to see.

Personally, I had never paid much attention to this. In fact, it wasn’t until I dressed professionally for the first time to meet the Canadian ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo that I looked into the mirror and thought about my future. At that moment, dressed exactly like an International Relations student, I thought I caught a glimpse of what my future could be. That phrase, spoken so much in passing, actually took on personal meaning to me. In the year before I left for university, I decided I wanted to do as much as I possibly could to become the future me that I saw. That process started when I decided to take every experience and ensure that I could glean the of best of it to my advantage.

We see it at MUN—for some of us, it’s why we’re here. Universities love any organization that turns normal high school teens into sharp, shrewd, professional members of an international governmental body. So we join and put it on our resumes, nodding continually as adults and students alike tell us how beneficial the experience will be.

But I wonder...how is MUN actually preparing us for our futures? How can we make the most of this experience, since we’ve been “forced” for various reasons to be a part of this conference? Apart from the obvious benefits, like learning how to dress and act professionally in a business environment and understanding how to work with people from different backgrounds, there are less obvious advantages gained from participating in MUN. When you see yourself all suited up at the conference, debating soundly in front of your entire committee, and creating and maintaining connections with people across the world, you might be catching a glimpse of your #futureself. Here are three reasons that show how taking MUN seriously and making the most of it is subtly preparing you for your future.
Preparing you for the Future

1. Leadership and Problem-solving
I’m aware we all know at this point that MUN supposedly develops leadership and problem-solving skills—it’s probably the biggest benefit. However, as experienced MUN-ers, we know that flawed resolutions come up, and groups fall through, leaving us to pick up the pieces and try our best to start all over again. That “take charge” attitude you assume when everything goes wrong and you can’t stand to watch for another minute — this will help you in the future.

2. People skills/connections
MUN practically forces you to interact with people and in turn, make friends. In your future career, you will have to work with people from different backgrounds, whether or not you get along with them. Furthermore, it’s the people who make the most of this and make connections with their coworkers who go far. That person sitting next to you in your committee could end up being Secretary General at next year’s conference—you’ll miss out, knowing you could have had a chance to move up with them. Learning how to make connections now and not later is something most adults probably wished they’d learned at our age.

3. Second chances
Even if your resolution doesn’t pass this year, there’s always next year. In the real world, you won’t always get a second chance. That project you needed to nail in order to earn that promotion won’t come again—and you might have to work another year before such a great opportunity presents itself. Here, you can try again at the next conference, which for some, is only a few weeks away. Here, you immediately learn to get up from your mistakes, not getting stuck in the fact that you made them, but embracing the idea that you can prevent them. This skill takes years for some adults to learn, and MUN gives you a chance to implement it in your own life.

As the conference comes to a close, I hope you think deeply about the lessons you’ve learned here at THIMUN. Your experience here is not wasted. What will come out of the mistakes or triumphs you’ve made are up to you—I only hope that you join me in using every experience to develop and improve your #futureself.
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