Waves of Change

CalsMUN 2024

Research Report

Forum: UNESCO

Issue: Promoting ocean appreciation through marine science and education programs

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Chair Introduction

“Hi, I’m Lucas. I am 15 years old and I come from Romania and Spain. One of my hobbies is water polo and this is my second time chairing.”

“Dear delegates, my name is Danyal Mohammed and I’ll be your deputy chair. I’m currently a student at the British School in the Netherlands in my final year of my GCSEs. I’ve attended 5 conferences as a delegate before and I’m excited to make CALSMUN my 6th conference and first chairing experience in MUN. I can’t wait to debate in January and I look forward to meeting you all!”

Introduction

The modern world faces challenges regarding the appreciation of oceans. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the gravity of the possibly irreversible situation our oceans are in. There are many ways this problem can be tackled. Two major solutions are implementing education programs and promoting marine science. Our oceans are very valuable, and their importance is being overlooked by governments, companies, and general populations alike. At least in the case of the latter, this is not because they do not care, but because they are not informed about the severity of the situation our oceans are in.

Definition of Key Terms

COP

Conference Of the Parties. A yearly conference consisting of 197 countries all present with the goal of limiting climate change

ICO

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. An organisation endorsed by UNESCO with the goal of international cooperation to unify the research of the oceans

Paris Agreement

A binding agreement signed in 2016 by all UN member states. It consists of articles that explain deadlines and limitations of climate change

ACE

Action for Climate Empowerment. It exists to carry out what Article 12 of the Paris Agreement states. It's all about education, public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation when it comes to climate change.

NGO

Non-Governmental Organisation. An organisation that is not associated with any government often with the purpose of addressing a social or political issue

SDG

Sustainable Development Goals. UN goals adopted in 2015 to fight poverty and protect the planet. With the ultimate goal of ensuring people can live in peace and prosperity by 2030

WOCE

World Ocean Circulation Experiment. A research program that was aimed at understanding the role of the ocean in climate change

General Overview

Ocean appreciation is all about raising public awareness about the dangers our oceans are facing. Luckily, there are many ways this problem can be tackled, the two solutions that will be covered are stated above as: promoting marine science and education programs. Thinking positively, Oceans cover over 70% of our planet and account for about 50% of the world's oxygen. In addition to this, the market is extremely large, and it is estimated that up to 40 million people will be employed in ocean-reliant industries by 2030. In fact, in 2010 the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) estimated that the ocean has a value of 1.5 trillion dollars. These huge statistics show the sheer value that the ocean provides for humanity. However, not all is positive and economic, there still remains another side of the coin. As of right now, 90% of the big fish population has been depleted

and 50% of coral reefs have been destroyed. We are taking more from the ocean than the ocean can replenish leading to a slow but devastating demise for oceans around the world. It is of utmost priority that the aforementioned prospects become a reality.

Educational Programs

One can safely say that when it comes to promoting ocean appreciation through educational programs, there are many routes to take. Educational programs can refer to making changes to the school curriculum in certain ways to promote ocean appreciation. We could promote special classes to ensure that oceans are appreciated by the next generation. However, the circumstances of lower economically developed countries must be considered when considering such recommendations. Educational programs could also refer to educating the general population (including adults and seniors) through non-academic means such as NGOs (non-governmental organisations) that will spread a meaningful message about ocean appreciation. Advertising programs can use influencers to spread the message of ocean appreciation while ensuring that all the information that is put online is reliable and correct to avoid spreading misinformation.

Marine Science

The use of marine science is another way to promote ocean appreciation. Marine science is the study of the ocean and its inhabitants. This links well to educational programs, since the more we understand about the oceans around us, the more information we have at our disposal to inform the population about which could promote their appreciation of the oceans. But how is this done? More people are needed to study this science and more funding is vital. As of April 2023, 70% of marine science funding came from public funding, this can change this by ensuring that governments around the world contribute to the funding (instead of solely the public). We could also use funds to build laboratories, research centres and promote qualifications in marine science by offering bigger grants to students willing to study marine science.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Education Programs

When it comes to providing the world with education programs to promote ocean appreciation, many achievements have already been made. One such achievement is the creation of “World Oceans Day”, which is observed on the 8th of June annually. It aims to bring light to the aforementioned challenges our oceans are facing. A lot of these educational programs have been aimed at tackling Article 14 of the SDG (Sustainable

Development Goals) which states that we should “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”. This is very important since it perfectly outlines the topic at hand. A good example of a great solution is what the Australian government has proposed. They have an “Australian National Science Week” where Australian citizens are able to attend over 1,000 events hosted by universities, schools, research institutions, libraries, museums and science centres across the country. This attracts more than a million people of all ages. Australia is not the only country with commitments like this, many other countries host science weeks including “Science Week Ireland", “Primary Science Week New Zealand” and “National Science Day” in India. As stated previously, citizen science is a great way to engage the general population. Good examples of these are museums, zoos, and aquariums which allow for education through interactive or visual learning. Exhibitions are also great for increasing general education and appreciation of oceans. Other examples of education are through movies like “Finding Nemo”, television programs like “BBC's Blue Planet”, magazines, newspapers and the internet in the form of social media or online games.

Marine Science

Previous attempts to solve the issue of promoting ocean appreciation are through promoting marine science. Not many achievements have been made in this field, as mentioned previously, 70% of funding for marine science comes from the public. Many technological developments have come about in the field of marine science (also known as Oceanography) and promoting it. The ICO (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) is currently being used to share our achievements in oceanography internationally. However, this organisation only contains 147 countries and major superpowers like the USA are not involved. The creation of WOCE is another example of the promotion of marine science. In the late 20th century scientists were given grants under WOCE and the Argo program in order to research and further our understanding of the oceans and its relation to climate change. On top of this, many governments have been giving out grants in the past years to students publishing in STEM subjects of which Oceanography is part of. All of this combined with the increase in funding for oceanographic institutes and research centres has led to a general increase in oceanography and marine science. All of this new research has led to a better understanding of our oceans research and therefore has allowed the general population to become more informed on the issue.

Possible solutions

The problem of promoting ocean appreciation can be solved in a range of inventive ways with the help of marine science and education programs. Firstly, the problem can be addressed by the promotion of educational programs for the adolescent and child population. This population comprises the future minds of our world, and it is of utmost importance that we prioritise their ocean literacy and appreciation of the oceans. This can be done through promotional content on social media funded by governments (instead of crowdfunding). This online option could consist of a form of government-funded courses to teach the general population (more importantly adolescent population) about the problems that our oceans face. Another solution to the question could be the implementation of open 'science days' hosted by museums or universities where the population can participate physically in activities that could further their understanding and appreciation of the oceans through interactive and educational means. Such events could also be used for fundraising to help fund grants for people willing to take on projects in the field of marine science. On the topic of grants, governments around the world could increase budgets for funding projects in marine science since the more we understand about the oceans, the more valuable information our population can absorb.

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