

## Georgiana Chiriac, Harvard Model United Nations (2013)

Georgiana Chiriac, an [MSc International Development \(Poverty, Inequality and Development\) \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development-poverty-inequality.aspx\)](#) student in IDD reports on the activities undertaken as part of the delegation from the University of Birmingham to the Harvard National Model United Nations (HNMUN), Boston US, 2013.



### Activities undertaken as part of the conference programme

The conference spanned over four days, 14-17 February 2013, at which a few thousands students from across the world (delegations from 48 countries) represented various nations as part of the HNMUN exercise. The Dominican Republic was represented by the University of Birmingham. Participants took on roles as diplomats, investigated international issues, debated, deliberated, consulted, and then developed solutions to world problems.

The ten 10 people-delegation from the University of Birmingham was divided by councils. One of my colleagues and I represented the Dominican Republic in the Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee (the Third of the General Assembly), debating issues of minority rights and the right to self-determinations (topic A), as well as freedom of speech and of the media (topic B). Each of us had to right a position paper (as representatives of the Dominican Republic) on the above mentioned topics. On the first day, topic A was elected as the topic of debate of this year's conference (in that particular committee). Our two-people delegation in this committee has been successful in debating, actively participating, negotiating and exchanging contacts throughout the four-day period.

This event encapsulates the essence and spirit of the United Nations' diplomacy that originally defined the organisation. The event aimed at involving all participants in creating solutions to some of the most important current issues in the world (e.g. conflict, peace and reconstruction, social exclusion of minorities, climate change, etc.), such as working papers and finally, draft resolutions with signatory countries (on the last day of conference).

The event engaged us into an invaluable and innovative exercise of negotiation that would educate us about diplomacy and applying diplomatic solutions in order to solve pressing issues that face the international community today. The exercise meant to prepare us for the real world of diplomacy, international development, development management and politics, either within the UN system or other organisations.

Overall, this opportunity was excellent for me and for the entire delegation in terms of gaining knowledge and expertise at the highest level, as well as with regards to personal growth and development.

### Personal statement

The HNMUN event constituted a highly necessary and invaluable experience in my career in international relations and international development (also as practitioner). The simulation of UN activities including negotiations, debates, deliberations and solution developing have been an important package of skills and experiences that will highly benefit my career in the future.

This event came at a perfect moment in my life when I am currently a Master's student in International Development at the University of Birmingham, preparing for my dissertation (related to policy making and implementation in the case of the Roma/Travellers/Gipsies in the European Union).

The event has boosted my research and analytical skills in this respect and allowed me to learn more about diplomacy and policy making at international level (that ultimately impacts local levels). Since at the conference I was in charge with the Social aspect of the Dominican Republic (i.e. minorities and social exclusion issues), this helped me gain a deeper understanding of such issues facing most of the countries today and the response the central governments give to both national and local needs through inclusive and participatory agendas.

Not only will it benefit me for my dissertation and Masters studies, but it has enhanced my employability with the United Nations (specifically with the UN Development Programme (UNDP)) or the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - a lifetime goal.

The impact of this event on my personal development would have proved to be essential, in terms of communication, confidence boost, negotiation skills, communication, team work and building, management, analytical and research skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, as well as enhancement of language proficiency (I already speak five languages: Romanian, English, French, German and Spanish) – all necessary in diplomacy and international relations and development work.

I wish to thank the University of Birmingham and especially the International Development Department for a unique opportunity and the Enhancement and Innovation Working Group (in particular to Dr. Emma Foster for accepting my application) for offering me a £100 towards the expenses related to this trip (i.e. transportation).

### Course information

- [IDD Masters degrees \(/schools/government-society/departments/international-development/courses/masters.aspx\)](#)

- [International Development \(with specialist pathways\) MSc/GDip \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development.aspx\)](#)
  - [International Development \(Poverty, Inequality and Development\) MSc/GDip \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development-poverty-inequality.aspx\)](#)
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