

UNESCO - UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

UNESCO is a Specialized Agency of the United Nations. Its constitution was adopted by the LONDON CONFERENCE in Nov, 1945 and entered into effect on 4 Nov, 1946 when 20 states had deposited the instruments of acceptance. It was founded on 16 Nov, 1945 as an IGO. Currently, 195 countries are members of UNESCO (as of 2018).

The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication in order to enhance universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the people of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the UN.

In support of this objective, UNESCO's principal functions are:

- to promote intellectual cooperation and mutual understanding among people through all means of mass communication
- to give fresh impulse to popular education and to the spread of culture
- to maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge
- to encourage scientific research and training
- to apply sciences to ensure human development and the rational management of natural resources.

HEADQUARTER: UNESCO, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75700, Paris, France

MOTTO: The motto of the UNESCO is, "since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the foundations for peace should be sought."

As a forum for global intellectual cooperation, UNESCO has the widest range of programmes of all UN specialised agencies. This includes education, science, culture, communication and information. The concrete objectives in the individual programme areas are redefined every two years by the UNESCO General Conference. Medium Term Strategies set out overarching programme objectives. The Secretariat implements the UNESCO programmes operationally.

UNESCO has a total budget of \$1.2 billion for the years 2018 and 2019, of which \$592.2 million is through membership fees. Germany (July 1951 joining) is the third largest contributor to UNESCO after Japan and China. The financial situation has been tense since the failure of US contributions since 2011- until then the largest contributor. In Oct 2017, the US announced its withdrawal from UNESCO, which came into effect at the end of 2018.

STRUCTURE

UNESCO has three bodies according to its constitution:

1. The General Conference
2. The Executive Board
3. The Secretariat

The General Conference is the assembly of all Member States, which meets every two years. At the General Conference, each member state has one vote. It is the supreme decision-making and controlling body of UNESCO.

It sets the objectives and general guidelines of UNESCO's work. It convenes state conferences and adopts recommendations or agreements.

The General Conference elects the members of the Executive Board and at its suggestion, appoints the Director General.

The Executive Board consists of 58 member states and meets five times in the Biennium. It reviews UNESCO's work programme and makes recommendations to the General Conference.

The Secretariat implements the UNESCO programmes operationally. The Secretariat is headquartered in Paris and has more than 50 field offices worldwide.

UNESCO is a forum for international cooperation and exchange of information, experience and ideas. It is not a development aid organisation or agency for project funding.

It builds model projects, advises governments through expert missions and ministerial conferences and promotes knowledge sharing through more than 250 larger and countless smaller expert networks.

An important function of UNESCO is the development of normative instruments at intergovernmental level. It has passed numerous international conventions, recommendations and declarations, most notably the 1972 Convention on the protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage.

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION: UNESCO makes an important contribution to improving education worldwide. In the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), UNESCO has tasked itself with

implementing SDG4- ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. In 2015, the UNESCO member states adopted the Global Education Agenda 2030 in order to achieve these goals- agenda to coordinate and implement and providing global monitoring of progress in education (main task).

- a. In this context - Global Education Monitoring Report- 2019 was launched at the Federal Foreign office in Berlin Nov. 2018
- b. Global Education Meeting (GEM) in Brussels in Dec 2018, which took stock of the progress made and challenges faced
- c. UNESCO- responsible for the implementation of the World Action Program 'Education for Sustainable Development' (2015-2019) includes overall concept of ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development that will be taught at different levels of education.
- d. UNESCO Associated Schools Network, motto of the curriculum is: 'learning to live together in a pluralistic world of cultural diversity'.
- e. UNESCO Chairs programme - 40 UNITWIN Networks, 700 UNESCO Chairs-> 116 centres. Priority areas - education in the natural and social sciences, culture and communication.

SCIENCE: UNESCO offers a global forum in which science and politics work together to formulate guidelines for sustainable development. UNESCO does not research itself and is not a research funding institution. It supports its member states in capacity-building (such as training of staff or equipment of institutions), promotes international research operation and open data exchange and defines global standards.

Goals of the UNESCO Science Programme:

- promoting peace through scientific cooperation
- help developing and emerging economics to build research infrastructures to participate in technical and economic progress.
- Develop scientific knowledge to set concrete, locally adopted sustainable development goals, including through an improved environmental management
- Ask ethical questions about global change and new technologies.

SPONSORS of the Science Programme are (in addition to the main secretariat of UNESCO in Paris):

- UNESCO regional and country offices (for eg , Regional office for South- Eastern Europe in Venice),
- UNESCO Science Institutes (i.e. IHE in Delft for training in water topics). Scientific Institutes under UNESCO auspices, -
Intergovernmental and expert panels of long -term scientific programmes, National Commission for UNESCO,
- National Commission for scientific long-term programmes, and
- UNESCO chairs
- National Committees have been set up in many countries to involve scientist at national level in the work of UNESCO as fully as possible.

LONG- TERM SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMMES

International Hydrological Program (IHP), International Governmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), Man and the Biosphere (MAB), International Geoscience Program (IGSP), International Programme of Basic Sciences (IBSP), Management of Social Transformation (MOST)

CULTURE:

- The protection and conservation of cultural heritage (April 2006), the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity and dialogue between cultures are the main tasks of UNESCO in this programme area.
- There are over 1073 monuments in 167 countries on the UNESCO World Heritage list.
- The Convention for the protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which entered into force in April 2006,
- The Convention on the protection and promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which entered into force in March 2007, are new and important UNESCO instruments for International Cultural Policy.

COMMUNICATION:

Here, the focus is on the promotion of modern knowledge societies', freedom of speech and freedom of the press as well as on free access to information and knowledge. UNESCO promotes information technologies to overcome the 'digital divide'. In developing and conflict regions, it trains journalists and builds independent media. The 'Memory of the World' programme serves to preserve the documentary heritage.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNESCO

The UNESCO is under scrutiny after the US stated it will withdraw from the organization by Dec 31, 2018. Founded in 1945 in response to the horrific aftermath of both WWI and II, the organization currently has 195 member states and 10 associated states

UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova (present Director- General is Audrey Azoulay) said the US withdrawal would be a loss to the UN and "a loss to multilateralism.....At the time when the fight against violent extremism calls for renewed statement in education, in dialogue among cultures to prevent hatred, it is deeply regrettable that the US should withdraw from the UN agency leading these issues...."

"Building peace in the minds of men and women" is UNESCO's slogan and is rooted in efforts to coordinate international cooperation in its named components: education, science and culture, as well as communication. These efforts made by the UN agency have a goal to mobilize societies accross the globe so that each child and citizen..." has access to quality education; a basic human right and an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable development. May grow and live in a cultural environment rich in diversity and dialogue, where heritage serves as a bridge between generations and peoples. Can fully benefit from scientific advances; and can enjoy full freedom of expression; the basis of democracy, development and human dignity."

The importance of UNESCO is highlighted by an interview with Jaroslava Moserova , President of the General Conference in 1999, who was convinced of the role that the organization could play in a post-cold war world. She said in the interview that " The aim of UNESCO is to improve the quality of life. It is not a political organization at all...the main pillar of UNESCO is education, access to

education. When you hear the delegates from different cultures, different traditions, there is one thing all of them agree on, and that is that thing all of them agree on, and that is that the only tool for better or worse is education."

The note Moserova made when acknowledging that education is an indispensable tool is only one of the ways to see the importance of UNESCO.

The other pillars of UNESCO also point to the significance of their work and efforts. When considering that preserving heritages and promoting scientific advancement are the other focusses of the organization, the importance of UNESCO and the benefits of the agency can be subtle.

Seeing as how encouraging positive cultural experiences, scientific development and educational growth are all components that lead to overall poverty reduction and socio-economic advancement for countries. UNESCO puts an emphasis on children, and as UNICEF reiterates, reducing poverty begins with children and the things that improve their quality of life. Education is one of the most important pieces and UNESCO's efforts to improve it will benefit people all over the world.