



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
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Peacebuilding

Bureau of Public Information

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Peacebuilding

A commitment to peace implies a way of resolving conflicts, not according to the force of might, but by respecting internationally accepted norms, the rule of law and negotiation, with the aim of achieving a fullness of life for each and every one. By its Constitution, UNESCO is called upon to “build the defenses of peace in the minds of men.”

In 1998, at the 53rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, Member States proclaimed the decade of 2001-2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, and UNESCO as the lead agency for the Decade. They defined the culture of peace as “consisting of attitudes and behaviors that reject violence and endeavor to prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes with a view to solving problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations.” To give further impetus to the Decade, the Declaration and Programme of Action on a culture of peace was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999. The Programme of Action defines eight action areas that are necessary for building a culture of peace. These include:

- fostering a culture of peace through education
- promoting sustainable economic and social development
- promoting respect for all human rights
- ensuring equality between women and men
- fostering democratic participation
- advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity
- supporting participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge
- and promoting international peace and security.



The Programme of Action also stressed that everyone – governments, civil society, the media and UN agencies – must take responsibility in implementing the Programme of Action, and the imperative need to strengthen and promote partnerships among actors who are involved in the global movement for a culture of peace.

In September 2005, world leaders reaffirmed in the World Summit Outcome document the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, and they committed

themselves to taking action to promote a culture of peace and dialogue at the local, national, regional and international levels and requested the Secretary-General to explore implementation mechanisms and to follow up on those activities.

Assisting countries devastated by conflict

As part of UNESCO's work to promote the Decade, UNESCO is assisting countries that have been devastated by conflict and violence in order to aid them in their recovery efforts through:

- providing upstream policy advice and capacity-building to restore national planning and management capacities to cope with challenges;
- supporting dialogue, confidence-building and reconciliation efforts, in particular by providing local and national policy-makers with evidence based research and analysis as well as with a platform for policy debate and dialogue to define reconciliation and reconstruction options and to reinforce national ownership;
- empowering local communities to participate in peace processes and in responding to their needs for access to critical information;
- and supporting professional communities according to their specific needs.

Reconstructing education systems

In this framework, UNESCO is working to provide an appropriate response to countries affected by conflict to ensure that education is provided for all learners, if possible before the crisis ends and during the early reconstruction period because education is a key component of the longer term peace-building and nation-building processes. In this regard, UNESCO, particularly through its education-related

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institutes, is building the capacity of educational planners and managers in conflict-affected nations; advocating the need to conduct education in conflict, emergencies and reconstruction; offering tailored services to Member States and providing technical assistance in the field in areas such as curriculum development or revision to ensure that education is teaching the values, attitudes and behavior inherent in a culture of peace. For example, UNESCO is assisting the following countries in reconstructing their education systems through its Reconstruction Programme for Education: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Colombia, Guatemala and Somalia. The programme has focused on (1) Development of national Education for All Plans; (2) Training of teachers and educational personnel; (3) Development of curricula, textbooks, and examination support; (4) HIV/AIDS education ;(5) Government Capacity Building; and (6) Reinforcing networks. Support through UNESCO's education institutes such as the International Bureau of Education (IBE) and International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) have been crucial to UNESCO's efforts in this regard.

Culture heritage and cultural diversity - a vector for reconciliation

UNESCO is also promoting the understanding of the proactive role of cultural heritage and cultural diversity and human creativity as a fundamental vector for reconciliation and a strong component of peace building, social cohesion, and mutual understanding. For example, through the international initiative "Cultural Heritage - a Bridge towards a Shared Future" coordinated by UNESCO, regional cooperation is being strengthened for the protection and promotion of South-East European cultural heritage. Its conceptual foundations lie in considering heritage as a shared value: a bridge between cultures and communities. It is a mechanism for organizing the most productive dialogue between meaningful pasts and desirable futures. The general objective of the initiative is to

contribute to political stability, and social and economic development in South-East Europe through enhancing regional co-operation on culture and cultural heritage.

Promoting independent media

As the media has a critical role to play in helping communities to live together in peace, by promoting respect for the diversity of identities, bringing social recognition to different groups and communities, and promoting dialogue, UNESCO is supporting the reconstruction and development of a free, independent, non-partisan and professional media sector, as well as providing universal access to information and ICTs in countries affected by conflict. Work in this area includes providing assistance for media legislation reform according to international standards; training media professionals and capacity building for independent and community media; promoting dialogue through the promotion of media co-productions that promote a culture of peace; providing universal access to information by providing increased access to ICTs and by preserving audio-visual archives and libraries; and promoting fair, safe and professional election coverage to allow citizens to make informed choices by providing training to enhance professional election reporting. These areas are providing the foundations necessary for peace by providing citizenship education, and contributing to mutual understanding and solidarity.

Prevention and resolution of water-related conflicts

To address conflict and post-conflict situations where vulnerable populations need additional support to manage their shared water resources in a consistent and equitable manner, UNESCO is providing support through its project 'From Potential Conflict to Cooperation potential' (PCCP), housed within the International Hydrological Programme (IHP). Through IHP-PCCP, UNESCO is facilitating multi-level and interdisciplinary dialogues in order to foster peace, co-operation and development related to the management of

shared water resources. One example of the Organization's work in this area is the project *Harnessing History to Understand the Current Israeli-Arab Water Landscape*. The purpose of this Israeli-Palestinian cooperative research and training project is to establish the basis for historical analysis of water management in the Jordan River basin in order to improve the understanding of the current situation regarding water conflicts and landscape planning in this region. Israeli-Palestinian collaboration will consequently be improved through such a joint scientific exercise and the research capacities and scientific collaboration of the parties involved in the process will be strengthened.

Promoting policy-oriented research and human rights

UNESCO is also strengthening the national and regional research systems in countries affected by conflict to provide policy-oriented research in the fields of poverty eradication, migration, urban issues and youth and gender policies. One example of UNESCO's work in this area is the *Research-Policy Forum - Greater Horn Horizon Initiative* - on the future of the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda). The Organization is also putting a special focus on policy-oriented research that examines the ways that women are involved in and affected by global tensions and armed conflicts, and how women's involvement in conflict resolution, peace-building, and reconstruction can be promoted. In cooperation with national authorities, UNESCO is strengthening institutional mechanisms and capacity to promote and protect women's human rights in post-conflict situations. For example, UNESCO, in collaboration with the Palestinian Authorities established a Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Center which will contribute to the development of policy oriented research and evidence based

policies for gender equality and the human rights of women. Work on establishing a similar Center for the Great Lakes Region (GLR) in Africa is also currently underway.

Building partnerships

To achieve lasting peace necessitates a concrete contribution by the entire international community. Partnerships with civil society organizations are critical in this effort. In its resolution 61/45, the General Assembly commended UNESCO for recognizing the promotion of a culture of peace as an expression of its fundamental mandate, and encouraged it, as lead agency for the Decade, to strengthen further the activities it had undertaken for promoting a culture of peace. The Organization has taken up this challenge and is carrying out activities to assist countries on their pathway to peace in many different ways. During the 2008-2009 biennium (see para. 08016 and para. 08015 in Draft 34 C/5 Volume 2 Second Version), it is proposed that two new intersectoral platforms be introduced to support countries in post-conflict and disaster situations and to contribute to a dialogue among civilizations and cultures and a culture of peace.

To find out more

UNESCO's culture of peace website:

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=37083&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO IBE <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/>

UNESCO – Media in Post-Conflict Situations

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=18538&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Culture Heritage- a Bridge Towards a Shared Future - <http://www.see-heritage.org/>

UNESCO – Gender, Peace-building and Reconstruction:

http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=7839&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO – From Potential Conflict to Co-operation Potential

<http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/pccp/about.shtml>