



UNESCO

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“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed” - UNESCO

What is UNESCO?

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the [United Nations \(UN\)](#). It seeks to **build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture.**

- It is also a member of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)**, a coalition of UN agencies and organizations aimed at fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- UNESCO's **Headquarters** are located in **Paris** and the Organization has more than 50 field offices around the world.
- It has **193 Members and 11 Associate Members** (As of April 2020) and is governed by the General Conference and the Executive Board.
 - Three UNESCO member states are not UN members: **Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine.**
 - While three UN member states (**Israel, Liechtenstein, United States**) are not UNESCO members.

What are the Objectives?

- UNESCO focuses on a set of objectives such as:
 - Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning
 - Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development
 - Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges
 - Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace
 - Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication
 - Focuses on global priority areas - **“Africa” and “Gender Equality”.**

What is the History Behind the Establishment of UNESCO?

- In 1942, during the Second World War, the governments of the European countries, which were confronting Germany and its allies, met in the United Kingdom for the **Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME)**.
 - Upon the proposal of CAME, a United Nations Conference for the establishment of an educational and cultural organization was convened in London in November 1945.
- At the end of the conference, UNESCO **was founded on 16 November 1945.**
 - The **first session** of the General Conference of UNESCO was held in **Paris** during November-December of 1946.

What are the Areas of Specialization of UNESCO?

Education Transforms Lives

- Education transforms lives and is at the heart of UNESCO's mission to build peace, eradicate poverty and drive sustainable development.
- The Organization is the **only United Nations agency** with a mandate to cover all aspects of education.
- It has been entrusted to **lead the Global Education 2030 Agenda** through Sustainable Development Goal - 4.
 - **'Education 2030 Framework for Action' (Incheon Declaration)** is the roadmap to achieve the global education 2030 agenda..
- Its work encompasses educational development from **pre-school to higher education and beyond**.
- Themes include global citizenship and sustainable development, human rights and gender equality, health and HIV and AIDS, as well as technical and vocational skills development.

Protecting Our Heritage and Fostering Creativity

- It is becoming a fact that no development can be sustainable without a strong culture component.
- UNESCO has adopted a **three-pronged approach** to make culture takes it rightful place in development strategies and processes:
 - **Spearheads worldwide advocacy** for culture and development.
 - **Engages with the international community** to set clear policies and legal frameworks
 - Works on the ground to **support governments and local stakeholders** to safeguard heritage, strengthen creative industries and encourage cultural pluralism.
- Some important conventions and International treaties of UNESCO to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage:
 - The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
 - The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
 - The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)
 - The Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)
 - The Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
 - The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property (1970)

Science for a Sustainable Future

- Science equips us to find solutions to today's acute economic, social and environmental challenges and to achieving sustainable development and greener societies.
- UNESCO works to assist countries to invest in **Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)**, to develop national science policies, to reform their science systems and to build capacity to monitor and evaluate performance through STI indicators..
- Also, UNESCO works with its member states to foster informed decisions about the use of science and technology, in particular in the field of bioethics.

Social and Human Sciences

- UNESCO helps to enable people to create and use knowledge for just and inclusive societies, support them in understanding each other and working together to build lasting peace.
- It promotes mutual understanding among member states through its intergovernmental Programme like **Management of Social Transformations (MOST)**, its **Youth Programme** and the **Culture of Peace and Non-Violence Programme** which include initiatives for democracy and global citizenship, intercultural dialogue, peace-building.

Communication and Information

- UNESCO **advances freedom of expression** and the safety of journalists, combats online hate speech, as well as disinformation and misinformation through awareness raising initiatives.
- It also **supports universal access to information and knowledge** through promoting Open Solutions, including Open Educational Resources, access for marginalized people, and multilingualism in Cyberspace.

What are the Global Priorities Of UNESCO?

Africa

- UNESCO is attentive to **54 African countries** with a stronger and better-targeted strategy.
- The adoption of the **African Union Agenda 2063** and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** paving the ground for the African Economic Community and the African Renaissance.

Gender Equality

- UNESCO holds that **women and men must enjoy equal opportunities**, choices, capabilities, power and knowledge as equal citizens.
- Equipping girls and boys, women and men with the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills to tackle gender disparities is a precondition to building a sustainable future for all.
- **Some important initiatives to achieve the objective of Gender equality are:**
 - UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan
 - Gender Equality Tools
 - Gender Views
 - Gender-related UNESCO Chairs and Networks
 - UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education
 - UNESCO Youth Mobile

What are Some of the Important Initiatives of UNESCO?

World Heritage Convention and List

- World Heritage Convention -**1972** links together the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties.
- The Convention defines the kind of natural or cultural sites (World Heritage Sites) which can be considered for inscription on the **World Heritage List**.
- The States Parties of convention are **encouraged to integrate the protection of the cultural and natural heritage into regional planning programmes**, set up staff and services at their sites, undertake scientific and technical conservation research.
- It explains how the **World Heritage Fund** is to be used and managed.
- Globally there are 1154 World Heritage sites in the 167 countries. Meanwhile, India has 40 **World Heritage Sites** that include 30 Cultural properties, 7 Natural properties and 1 mixed site.
 - Harappan city of **Dholavira** in Gujarat as India's **40th world heritage site**.
 - **Ramappa Temple (Telangana)** was India's 39th World Heritage Site.
 - **Khangchendzonga National Park**, Sikkim has been inscribed as India's first and the only **"Mixed World Heritage Site"**.
- In 2022, the Union Ministry of Culture **nominated [Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas temples](#)** for consideration as a **World Heritage site** for the year **2022-2023**.

Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

- It is an **intergovernmental scientific programme** that aims to establish a scientific basis for enhancing the relationship between people and their environments.
- It promotes innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.
- The **World Network of Biosphere Reserves** currently counts 701 sites in 124 countries all over the world, including 21 transboundary sites.

- India has **18 Biosphere reserves** out of which **12 have been recognized internationally under MAB program**:

International Geoscience and Global Geoparks Programme (IGGP)

- **International Geoscience Programme (IGCP)** harnesses the intellectual capacity of a worldwide network of geoscientists to lay the foundation for our planet's future, focusing on responsible resource extraction, natural hazard resilience and preparedness, and adaptability in the era of a changing climate.
- **UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp)** are laboratories for sustainable development which promote the recognition and management of Earth heritage, and the sustainability of local communities.
 - At present, there are **177 UNESCO Global Geoparks** in 46 countries.

International Hydrological Programme (IHP)

- The Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) is the **only intergovernmental programme of the United Nations system devoted to water research** and management, and related education and capacity development

World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)

- The growing global water crisis threatens the security, stability and environmental sustainability of developing nations.
 - The programme focuses on assessing the developing situation of freshwater throughout the world.
- It also coordinates the work of 31 UN-Water members and partners in the **World Water Development Report (WWDR)**.

International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP)

- It is an **international multidisciplinary programme established by UNESCO Member States** in order to reinforce intergovernmental cooperation in science to strengthen national capacities in the basic sciences and science education.

What are the Important Reports Released by UNESCO?

UNESCO Science Report

- UNESCO Science Report maps Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) governance around the world on a regular basis. The report is published **every five years**, on 10 November, to mark **World Science Day for Peace and Development**.

Global Education Monitoring Report

- Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report carries out its assessment of progress **towards the Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG4)** and its 10 targets, as well as other related education targets in the SDG agenda.
- The report examines different accountability mechanisms that are used to hold governments, schools, teachers, parents, the international community, and the private sector accountable for inclusive, equitable and quality education.

McBride Report of 1980

- The comprehensive report of the MacBride Commission is also named **"Many Voices, OneWorld"**.
- It analyzed communication problems in modern societies, particularly relating to mass media and news, consider the emergence of new technologies, and to suggest a kind of communication order (**New World Information and Communication Order**) to diminish these problems to further

peace and human development

UNESCO State of the Education Report for India: Children With Disabilities

- The **2019 report is the first edition of the annual report** to be published by UNESCO in India.
- It highlights accomplishments and challenges with regards to the right to education of **children with disabilities (CWDs)**.
- The findings of UNESCO's State of the Education Report 2021 were largely based on an analysis of the [Periodic Labour Force Survey \(PLFS\)](#) and the [Unified District Information System for Education \(UDISE\)](#) data (2018-19).
- It aims to **serve as a reference** for enhancing the **implementation of the [National Education Policy \(NEP\)](#)** and towards the realization of the [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 4](#) (target 4c on teachers).
 - **Target 4c:** By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

UNESCO And INDIA: What is the Scenario?

Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (INCCU)

- India has been a member of the UNESCO **since its inception in 1946**.
- UNESCO constitution requires that each Member State should have a principle body that shall work with the Organization. Thus, in India, **Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (INCCU)** was commissioned.
- UNESCO has two Offices in India
 - The **New Delhi cluster office** for eleven countries in South and Central Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka)
 - The **MGIEP - the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development** fully supported and funded by the Government of India.
- India has been elected to the **Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention** for the Safeguarding of the **Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)** for the 2022-2026 cycle.
 - India has served as a **member of the ICH Committee twice** — from 2006 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2018.
 - Earlier, [Durga Puja](#) in Kolkata was inscribed on the [UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage \(ICH\) of Humanity](#).

What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?

- Intangible cultural heritage is the **practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognise** as part of their cultural heritage.
- Also called **living cultural heritage**, it is usually **expressed in one of the following forms:**
 - Oral Traditions
 - Performing Arts
 - Social Practices
 - Rituals and Festive events
 - Knowledge and Practices concerning nature and the universe
 - Traditional Craftsmanship
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UNESCO's International Prizes and India

- **UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence**
 - It is established through the generous donation of the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Indian artist, writer and diplomat Mr Madanjeet Singh, the prize honors his **lifelong commitment to the cause of peace and tolerance.**
 - The **creation of the Prize in 1995** marked the **United Nations Year for Tolerance** and the 125th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi.
 - Since 1996, the Prize has been **awarded every two years** and, since 2002, it amounts to US \$ 100,000.
- **The UNESCO Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science**
 - It is an international distinction created by UNESCO in 1951 following a donation from Mr Bijoyanand Patnaik, **Founder and President of the Kalinga Foundation Trust in India.**

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Important International Days observed at UNESCO

| Date | Day |
|--------------|---|
| 24 January | International Day of Education |
| 11 February | International Day of Women and Girls in Science |
| 21 February | International Mother Language Day |
| 4 March | World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development |
| 8 March | International Women's Day |
| 21 March | International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination |
| 22 March | World Water Day |
| 6 April | International Day of Sport for Development and Peace |
| 23 April | World Book and Copyright Day |
| 3 May | World Press Freedom Day |
| 16 May | International Day of Light |
| | International Day of Living Together in Peace |
| 22 May | International Day for Biological Diversity |
| 5 June | World Environment Day |
| 8 June | World Oceans Day |
| 17 June | World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought |
| 18 July | Nelson Mandela International Day |
| 9 August | International Day of the World's Indigenous People |
| 12 August | International Youth Day |
| 8 September | International Literacy Day |
| 15 September | International Day of Democracy |
| 11 October | International Day of the Girl Child |
| 17 October | International Day for the Eradication of Poverty |
| 24 October | United Nations Day |
| 10 November | World Science Day for Peace and Development |
| 16 November | International Day for Tolerance |
| 25 November | International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women |
| 1 December | World AIDS Day |
| 3 December | International Day of Persons with Disabilities |
| 10 December | Human Rights Day |
| 18 December | International Migrants Day |

KEY FACTS : A SELECTION OF UNESCO'S SUCCESS STORIES



UNESCO preserves 1073 World Heritage sites in 167 countries



UNESCO coordinates Tsunami early warning systems all over the globe



UNESCO leads global efforts to reach quality education for all



UNESCO led the reconstruction of the Mausoleums in Timbuktu



UNESCO launched the SESAME world-class research laboratory in the Middle East



UNESCO stands up for freedom of expression and condemns the killing of journalists



Angkor Temple was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger



UNESCO published General Histories of Humanity, Africa, Asia, Islamic Culture, the Caribbean...



193 Member States, 11 Associate Members, 11 000 Associated Schools...



177 State Parties to the Intangible Heritage Convention



UNESCO builds Youth networks across 9 Mediterranean countries



UNESCO designated sites represent 10 million km², equivalent to the size of China

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