UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Consultations of the Director-General
with Member States

23 November 2012

Social Inclusion, Social Transformations, Social Innovation

What role for UNESCO in 2014-2021?

International Commitments and Agendas

Building inclusive societies is a longstanding commitment of the international community and a major component of the quest for a new humanism. The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, a key outcome of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, contained a specific commitment to advance social integration through fostering inclusive societies. Inclusive society is defined as a society for all, in which every individual has an active role to play. Such a society is based on fundamental values of equity, equality, social justice, and human rights and freedoms, as well as on the principles of tolerance and embracing diversity. An inclusive society should also be equipped with appropriate mechanisms that enable all its citizens to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, and ultimately shape their common future.[1] At the Summit, it was affirmed that social inclusion and integration is part of the key goals of social development.

Current international deliberations, such as those within the framework of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the ongoing process of formulating the post-2015 international development agenda, emphasize even stronger the stringent need for inclusion and equity. The recent report to the UN Secretary-General, drawing upon main successes and challenges in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), calls for (a) inclusive social development and (b) inclusive economic development to become two of the four key dimensions of the post-2015 international agenda.[2] This orientation is also articulated in the 2012 Report of the UN Secretary-General's High Panel on Global Sustainability.[3]

Despite the longstanding commitments, progress in implementing internationally agreed goals has not met people's expectations. At the same time, the world is undergoing rapid social transformations driven by the compounded impact of globalization, economic and financial crises and other social challenges which, among others, result in growing inequalities, especially gender-related, extreme poverty, exclusion and the denial of the basic human rights. Recent events such as the Arab spring, the social 'Indignados' movement and the London riots are examples of this trend. They also demonstrate the urge for innovative actions. New solutions must be sought to stimulate social transformations conducive to universal values of peace, human dignity and non-violence and rectify biases and lack of accountability linked to uneven power relations and ignorance prevailing in societies. Instituting participatory mechanisms leading to the formulation and operationalization of socially inclusive policies would enable the emergence of socially innovative solutions through international cooperation. This approach imposes a holistic analysis of challenges at hand by bringing on board the knowledge and life experiences of population groups, especially women and girls, that had remained excluded. Opening the playing field to forgotten actors sows the seeds of effective, sustainable, just and innovative responses.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

UNESCO's commitment to building inclusive societies cuts across its activities. Promoting the welfare of the world population and particularly reaching out to its most disenfranchised segments is central to the Organization's programmes in the field of education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, communication and information.
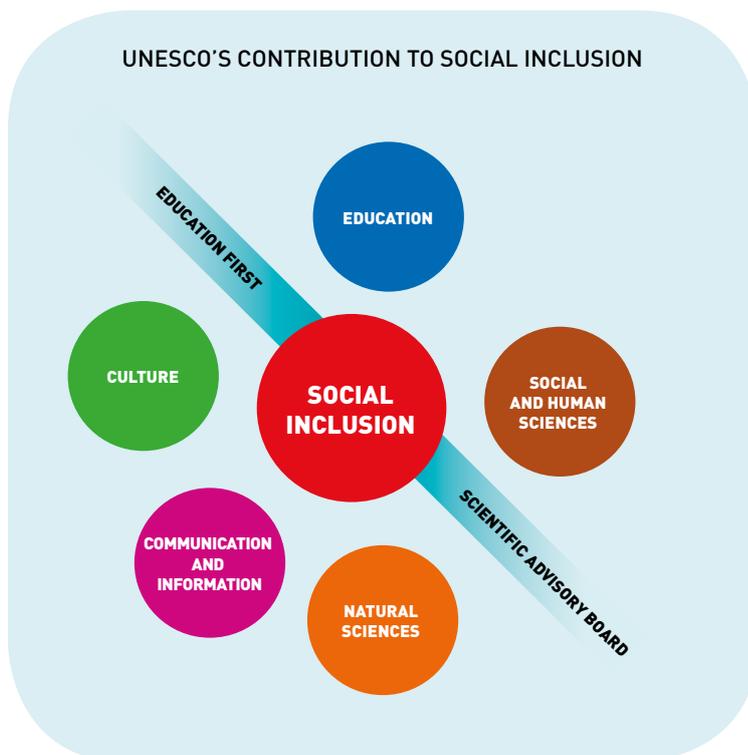
A main goal will therefore be to promote policy coherence at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels (a need reiterated by UN SG Report on *Realizing the Future We Want for All*), by assisting Member States in the design of inclusive and equitable policies and regulatory frameworks promoting an equal enjoyment of human rights, with emphasis on those within the fields of competence of the Organization. Predominant expert opinion points to the inadequate uptake of social inclusion in all its dimensions, social, economic, political and cultural at the policy level and the need for the integration of social inclusion objective as an overarching theme in all main policy areas.[4] This is precisely the gap that UNESCO's action intends to bridge through its particular competences. At the same time UNESCO will be supporting Member States in their efforts to meet their international commitments and implement corresponding policy and regulatory frameworks by building institutional and human capacities, especially of marginalized groups.

Important drivers for UNESCO's efforts will be two recent initiatives by the UN Secretary-General for which UNESCO has been entrusted with the lead role; the *Education First* initiative, which presents a historic opportunity for redoubling efforts to reach the Education for All goals, and the Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board, which is expected to nurture the connection between sciences and global sustainability focusing on research-policy linkages.

This orientation is further entrenched by UNESCO's commitment to mainstreaming gender equality and applying a human rights-based approach (HRBA). In particular, integrating HRBA entails that all programmes in all areas contribute to the full realization of universal human rights standards by reinforcing the capacities of duty-bearers and rights-holders and that human rights principles and standards guide programming in all its phases (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

Across all proposed orientations particular attention will be paid to promoting **gender equality** and addressing the challenges **Africa** is confronted with. This will build on ongoing initiatives and lessons learned.

UNESCO'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

EDUCATION FIRST

EDUCATION

CULTURE

SOCIAL INCLUSION

SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

NATURAL SCIENCES

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

A. SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF AN ENABLING POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The mechanisms of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme and its Intergovernmental Council (IGC MOST) are unique drivers for advancing a holistic capacity-building initiative on social inclusion. MOST is dedicated to building efficient bridges between social scientific knowledge, public policies and ensuing implementation. The Programme goes beyond established evidence-based approaches, through leveraging the universal dimension of knowledge that is inextricably linked to the ethical values of the United Nations. By acting as **a laboratory of ideas** and a catalyst for **international and regional intellectual cooperation and knowledge-sharing**, the MOST programme promotes the research – policy dialogue among a vast array of actors and therefore informs the formulation of policies, particularly at the upstream level. At the same time, the MOST Platform facilitates emerging forms of multi-stakeholder governance that better capture the needs and aspirations of peoples, cultures, ecosystems, and nations around the world. Since the 36th session of the General Conference, the IGC MOST, the MOST National Committees and the Fora of

Ministers of Social Development are aligned with the goal of promoting social inclusion.

The regional MOST Fora of Ministers of Social Development to be organized by the end of 2013 will be focusing on facilitating socially inclusive policies responsive to the realities of the respective regions.[5] They will pay attention to better understanding and explaining the formal and the informal, the power-centered and the people-centered, the pull of a unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar world today so that clearer concepts can evolve to appropriating and meeting the objectives of social justice and peace.

A key input for the production of quality research, building the evidence base on social inclusion and highlighting relevant dynamics, is generated through partnerships with renowned research institutions, such as in LAC FLACSO, CLACSO and the University of West Indies[6], as well as from the organization of "MOST Summer Schools" in LAC (in 2012 in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 28 May - 2 June, in 2013 in Lima, Peru). The vibrant network of UNESCO Chairs plays a key role within

the context of MOST policy dialogues owing to its capacity to mobilize academic expertise and generate **innovative ideas**. There is still a need to build social science institutional and structural capacities where our efforts would be geared towards the establishment of MOST National Committees and national social science academies.

A new MOST programme initiative aims to **develop institutional and human capacities** at regional and national levels **to assess, compare and reform national policy and regulatory frameworks** in view of increasing their inclusiveness and social sustainability. Such an analytical exercise will be informed by the findings of UN human rights monitoring mechanisms, and notably those of the Universal Periodic Review, bringing to the forefront patterns of discrimination and exclusion (including gender inequality), direct or indirect, formal or substantive, as well as barriers and structural causes that impede social development and universal access to services. Within this context, the Organization will: a) promote methodologies for assessing the level of inclusiveness and social sustainability of public policies and regulatory frameworks; b) conduct

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a coordinated and participatory **policy analysis** leading to consensual formulation of national reviews, identification of policy good practices and gaps, and formulation of country specific options for policy reform; c) provide technical support and **policy advice** to government and non-government policy practitioners and rights-holders groups for the operationalization of the policy scenarios, and the design of socially inclusive policies and planning processes.

This initiative is currently being piloted in three regions and nine countries[7], and may be accompanied by a potential partnership to measure migrants' integration policies. A complementary initiative in Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia and Zambia and focuses on assessing and strengthening the inclusiveness of youth-related policies.

With the aim of furthering the observance of the right to education, UNESCO will continue assisting the efforts of Member States to improve their education systems to promote better access to quality education and learning throughout the life cycle, especially girls and women, thus tackling the paralyzing challenge of illiteracy currently affecting nearly 800 million youth and adults. UNESCO builds also on the momentum of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to promote the "whole-school" approach as a means for transforming learners into engaged and responsible global citizens.

Targeted efforts will be pursued to enable marginalized groups to contribute to the **formulation of inclusive policies** related to key culture conventions supporting creativity and cultural expressions.

A valuable instrument for assessing inclusion in the domain of culture is the UNESCO Culture for Development Indicator Suite (CDIS), which highlights how culture contributes to development at national level fostering economic growth, and helping individuals and communities to expand their life choices and adapt to change.

Upholding the right to freedom of expression is inextricably linked to social inclusion. UNESCO's action involves **policy advice** to Member States on converting governmental broadcasting institutions into inclusive public service broadcasters, and the need for licensing and support for community broadcasting. It also includes advice to media institutions about engaging with new technologies that afford inclusion, such as cell phones and social media. Relevant here is the promotion of UNESCO's guidelines on user-generated content.

The Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media provide a tool for media and journalism training institutions to map the gaps in terms of content and staffing. The Media Development Indicators instrument is a further vehicle for addressing the issue of social inclusion, by mapping inter alia the extent to which a country's media landscape provides universal service and opportunity to marginalised persons.

Inclusion of indigenous peoples in global decision-making on sustainable development will be strengthened, notably through broadened recognition of the need to include local and indigenous knowledge-holders in global assessment processes for climate change (e.g. the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - IPCC) and the sustainable use of biodiversity (the

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - IPBES).

The emerging UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples will come to address the equitable inclusion of indigenous peoples across the Organization's areas of work in line with the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

UNESCO is also **fostering alliances** with municipal authorities. By providing **policy advice** and stimulating a rich exchange of ideas, experiences and good practices, the Organization aims to support the adoption of socially inclusive municipal policies.

One such example is the project assisting municipalities in India to address exclusion against internal migrants through the elaboration of policy briefs, training modules and a relevant toolkit. In this regard, the model of "Creative Cities" demonstrates the power of creativity to foster social engagement and its contribution to sustainable development.

Within the specific field of physical education and sport, UNESCO will be building on the outcome of the upcoming 5th meeting of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS V - to be hosted by Germany, in Berlin in May 2013) to provide **policy advice** on strategies and policies promoting equal access to, and participation for all in sport and physical education, particularly of women and girls and persons with disabilities.

MOST is dedicated to building efficient bridges between social scientific knowledge, public policies and ensuing implementation, through leveraging the universal dimension of knowledge that is inextricably linked to the ethical values of the United Nations.

B. CONTRIBUTING TO THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE POLICIES

An important part of the work on social inclusion is dedicated to **developing the capacities** of youth as drivers of **innovative** social transformations conducive to peace and sustainable development. To that end, UNESCO will be developing the capacities of young women and men to actively engage in democratic processes.

Currently, such initiatives are being carried out within the context of the Intersectoral Platform on Culture of Peace and Non Violence in Africa (Burundi, Ghana and Sierra Leone), the Arab States (Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia and Yemen) and LAC (Costa Rica, El Salvador and Nicaragua). In Tunisia, UNESCO is working to empower vulnerable young women to participate in advocacy and decision-making processes (planned for expansion to Egypt, Mauritania and Morocco). A closely related initiative implemented in LAC focuses on youth affected by violence and draws upon innovative solutions originating from the grassroots[8] while in Asia and the Pacific the "Youth Peace Ambassadors" training programme builds leadership skills for peace among young women and men.

Hitherto, little attention was paid by governments or NGOs or foundations to more systematically develop innovative solutions to common needs. Yet the results of **social innovation** – new ideas that meet unmet needs – are all around us.[9] In its fields of competence, UNESCO would encourage Member States to build the necessary linkages between public policies and investment in up-scaling social innovation.

Addressing youth unemployment and facilitating their successful transition to the world of work is a key determinant of social inclusion. Hence, UNESCO's efforts to enable youth, especially those from marginalized groups, to access skills development and training. Such efforts will build on the momentum created by the Shanghai Consensus reached at the *Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training* organized by UNESCO.

The UNEVOC Network which brings together around 170 TVET institutions and Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) with more than 9000 educational institutions in 180 countries could generate innovative ideas for promoting social inclusion. UNESCO programme for developing, through the UNESCO Youth Radio Toolkit, the capacities of broadcasters on the importance of youth radio programming and broadcasts serves the same objective.

Culture and unhindered access to its diverse resources and expressions provides important opportunities for combating exclusion and fostering dialogue. Within the framework of the implementation of the heritage-related conventions, and notably the 1972 World Heritage and 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Conventions, UNESCO will **develop capacities** for heritage management and safeguarding and optimize its use as a resource to encourage the participation of all segments of the society in cultural life. Heritage sites and museums will serve as places of social encounter, civic engagement and dialogue and as vectors for mitigating conflicts. A youth specific initiative within that context is the "Heritage in Young Hands" programme. Also the transformative power of creativity will be used to foster inclusive local development. Based on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, efforts will focus on providing support to the local creative economies through institutional and policy advice and capacity-building initiatives. Finally, the work on the safety of journalists and other communicators is also essential to building environments where excluded groups can feel safe to speak out about their own needs.

UNESCO's thematic focus on social inclusion, social transformations and social innovation for the years 2014-2021 permeates all aspects of the Organization's mission and also highlights the intrinsic link between the two overarching goals proposed for the next C/4 cycle. Indeed, a lasting peace on the one hand and sustainable development and poverty eradication on the other can only be attained if obstacles preventing vulnerable groups from exercising their rights are eliminated. There is a strong correlation between promoting social inclusion for building safer, more stable and just societies for all, and creating the enabling conditions for adequately managing social transformations leading to sustainable development and peace.

New solutions must be sought to stimulate social transformations conducive to universal values of peace, human dignity and non-violence and rectify biases and lack of accountability linked to uneven power relations and ignorance prevailing in societies.

Endnotes

1. UN (1995), Report of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/text-version/agreements/index.html
2. UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2011), Realizing the Future We Want for All Report to the Secretary-General.
3. UN Secretary-General's High Panel on Global Sustainability (2012), Resilient people, resilient planet: A future worth choosing.
4. e.g., UNDESA (2009), Report for the Expert Group Meeting on Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration: Lessons Learned from Existing Policies and Practices, available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2009/Ghana/ghanareport.pdf
5. The 2nd MOST Forum in the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago, 21 to 23 May 2012) adopted the "Port of Spain Declaration 2012" containing six concrete policy recommendations. The next forum on the agenda is the 9th Forum for Latin America, to be held in Honduras in February 2013.
6. In Latin-America and the Caribbean (LAC), UNESCO will partner with FLACSO, CLACSO and the University of West Indies to develop two comparative - and comparable - studies on the inclusiveness of public policies affecting young women and men in Latin America (Argentina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Uruguay) and in the Caribbean (CARICOM countries) respectively.
7. Namely in the Arab region (Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon), Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras), and the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Senegal).
8. For instance examples from the experience of slum communities in Rio de Janeiro highlighted in a recent study by the London School of Economics on "Underground Sociabilities: identity, culture and resistance in marginalized communities"
9. Examples of social innovation include Wikipedia and the Open University; microcredit and consumer cooperatives; charity shops and the fair trade movement; zero carbon housing schemes and community wind farms; restorative justice and community courts (see also *Social Innovation – What it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated* http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/centres/skoll/research/Pages/socialinnovationpaper.aspx).