BIOETHICS IN UNESCO

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GENDER AND BIOETHICS
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Background

In 1993: development of a formal programme

From 1993-2005: Standard Setting Action

• *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* (1997, endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1998)
• *International Declaration on Human Genetic Data* (2003)
• *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights* (2005).

From 2005:

Efforts to disseminate, promote, apply and elaborate the principles of the UDBHR
I. ELABORATION OF THE PRINCIPLES.

International Bioethics Committee:

*Unique global intellectual forum for a multidisciplinary, pluralistic and multicultural reflection on ethical and legal issues raised by research in life sciences and their applications.*

**Advisory role in:**

- **Capacity building**
- **Education and awareness**
I. ELABORATION OF THE PRINCIPLES.

**Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights**

Adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2005

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**Article 25 – Follow-up action by UNESCO**

1. UNESCO shall promote and disseminate the principles set out in this Declaration. In doing so, UNESCO should seek the help and assistance of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) and the International Bioethics Committee (IBC).

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*Division de l’éthique des sciences et des technologies – Section Bioéthique*
2008-2011

New Series:
Reports of IBC on the principles of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights:

• Consent

• Social Responsibility and Health

• Respect for Human Vulnerability and personal integrity
I. ELABORATION OF THE PRINCIPLES.

Work Programme for the biennium 2012-2013

IBC will continue its work on:

1. Traditional medicine and its ethical implications

Initiate the work on: Non Discrimination and Non Stigmatization as an umbrella to address:

Biobanks
Neurosciences
Nanotechnologies
Access to drugs
Organ transplantation and organ trafficking
HIV
II. Application of Principles: Capacity building:
Assistance in reinforcing the ethics infrastructures

Three practical projects:

• Assisting Bioethics Committees (ABC)
• Ethics Education Program (EEP)
• Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs)
Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights

Article 19. Ethics Committees

Independent, multidisciplinary and pluralist ethics committees should be established, promoted and supported at the appropriate level in order to:

a. Assess the relevant ethical, legal, scientific and social issues related to research projects involving human beings;
b. Provide advice on ethical problems in clinical settings;
c. Assess scientific and technological developments, formulate recommendations and contribute to the preparation of guidelines on issues within the scope of this Declaration;
d. Foster debate, education and public awareness of, and engagement in, bioethics.
Assisting Bioethics Committees Project (ABC)

**Main Objective:** To reinforce bioethics infrastructure in Member States through facilitating the establishment of national bioethics committees, and, once established, through the enhancement of their technical capacities.

**3 Steps of the ABC Project**

**Step I.** Exploration and assessment of the existing bioethics infrastructure in the country

**Step II.** Technical support for the establishment of the national bioethics committee

**Step III.** Technical support for long-term sustainability

- a. Technical capacity-building trainings
- b. Partnerships, internships and networking
- c. Provision of practical information
European Commission-UNESCO Conference: Joint Action for Capacity-building in Bioethics

Mexico City, 26-28 November 2009

Conference structured around three major themes:
- **Emerging bioethics issues**
- **Building an international network**
- **Engaging in ethical discourse**

Over 100 participants from all regions of the world agreed on:

- Using and promoting the available resources, such as the databases of the UNESCO Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs), as platforms of exchange of knowledge and information

- Promoting regional bioethics networks that actively facilitate exchange of knowledge and best practices concerning bioethical issues of common concern

- **PUBLICATION: NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEES IN ACTION: English and French (2010)**
Assisting Bioethics Committees Project (ABC)

Step III. Technical support

c. Provision of technical information

**UNESCO Guides**
- Guide N°1: Establishing Bioethics Committees
- Guide N°2: Bioethics Committees at Work: Procedures and Policies
- Guide N°3: Educating Bioethics Committees
- **Guide N°4: Ethics Committees and Public Policies**
- Guide N°5: Ethics Committees and Public Debate

Available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Turkish

**Other materials**
UNESCO, in partnership with the Kennedy Institute of Ethics (Georgetown University) and the Commission nationale d’éthique du Québec. IBC REPORT
Assisting Bioethics Committees Project (ABC)

Present state of the ABC Project

Countries that have already established NBC

- Chad (2011)
- El Salvador (2010)
- Malaysia (2010)
- Jamaica (2009)
- Colombia (2009)
- Cote d’Ivoire (2002)
- El Salvador (2009)
- Gabon (2008)
- Ghana (2009)
- Kenya (2009)
- Mali (2009)
- Oman (2009)
- Madagascar (2007)
- Guinea (2007)
- Togo (2007)

Countries considering the establishment of NBC

- Cap-Verde
- Comoros
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Namibia
- Niger
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Uganda
### Assisting Bioethics Committees Project (ABC)

#### Present state of the ABC Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NBCs that have signed MoU with UNESCO</th>
<th>Trainings in 2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire (first training Dec. 2009)</td>
<td>Jamaica (Second training in 4-8 April 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gabon (first training June 2009)</td>
<td>Guinea (Second training in Summer 2011)</td>
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<td>Guinea (first training April 2009)</td>
<td>Togo (Second training in Fall 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamaica (first training March 2009)</td>
<td>Ghana (Second training in 2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenya (first training Nov. 2009)</td>
<td>Kenya (Third training, Nov. 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Salvador (First training in Sep. 2010)</td>
<td>Colombia (First training in 2012)?</td>
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Assisting Bioethics Committees Project (ABC)

Feasibility study on introducing web based training modules for ABC project

In order to expend the coverage without compromising the quality of its engagement with the beneficiaries, we are exploring possibilities for introducing new information technologies and distance-learning methodologies, such as e-learning, webcasting and teleconferencing as tools for broader, more efficient and effective dissemination of information and capacity-building in bioethics.

BROADENING THE TARGET POPULATIONS:

JUDGES
PARLAMENTARIANS
JOURNALISTS
II. Application of Principles: Capacity building:
Assistance in reinforcing the ethics infrastructures

Ethics Education Program (EEP)

Launched at 1993 and expanded in 2005:
Art. 23 UDBHR encourages Member States to “foster bioethics education and training at all levels as well to encourage information and knowledge dissemination programmes about bioethics”
The Ethics Teacher Training Courses (ETTC) project targets the young generation of experts and educators who are engaged in teaching ethics at various academic faculties and institutions around the world.

Ethics Teachers Training Courses are designed to:

• introduce the participants to the means and resources of teaching ethics;

• teach the participants the methodologies and methods of teaching ethics; and

• assess and provide feedback on the participants’ demonstrations of teaching skills under the guidance of experienced teachers.
In the past, the Ethics Teacher Training Courses have been held in the following locations:

Bucharest, Romania (2006)
Egerton University Njoro Campus, Kenya (2007)
Bratislava, Slovakia (2007)
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (2007)
Minsk, Belarus (2008)
Dubrovnik, Croatia (2010)

In 2011, ETTC are planned in:
Belgrade, Serbia (27 June – 1 July 2011)
Dubrovnik, Croatia (4 – 8 July 2011)
Baku, Azerbaijan (Dec, 2011)
Windhoek, Namibia (Fall 2011 or 2012)
Nairobi, Kenya (Fall 2011 or 2012)
UNESCO Bioethics Core Curriculum

- Based on principles of Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights
- Proposes a minimum program
- Flexibility: does not impose a particular model
- Global outreach: useful in all regions
- Heterogeneity: variety and diversity around a common core

*Aim:* to facilitate the introduction of bioethics primarily in medical and science schools
Supplements to the UNESCO Bioethics Core Curriculum:

- Casebook on Benefit and Harm
- Casebook on Human Rights and Human Dignity

Designed to be used with the Core Curriculum, or as stand-alone study material for one of the bioethical principles in the Declaration.

Freely available in hardcopy, in CD-ROM as well as for electronic download through the UNESCO website (www.unesco.org)
UNESCO Bioethics Core Curriculum

NEW

• Largely adopted by Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)
• Used for the revision of medical ethics and law curricula in the U.K and backed up by the General Medical Council of the UK and the British Medical Association
• Essential component of Master in Bioethics of the National Guard Health Affairs in Saudi Arabia
• END OF PILOT

Aim: to facilitate the introduction of bioethics primarily in medical and science schools
Global Ethics Observatory

- Database 1: experts (*Who is who in ethics?*)
- Database 2: institutions, organisations, commissions
- Database 3: ethics teaching programmes
- Database 4: legislation
- Database 5: codes of conduct
- Database 6: resources in ethics

Freely accessible

6 languages: Arabic, Chinese,
English, French, Russian, Spanish

www.unesco.org/shs/ethics/geobs
UNESCO Regional Documentation Centres

Regional Documentation Centres:

- Are an important resource for future activities

- Make information and documentation from the region itself available and distribute information materials from other regions and UNESCO.

Centres have been established in:

- Vilnius (Lithuania)

- Eagerton (Kenya)
III. Dissemination

Publications

- February 2009: English version
- French translation ready
- Director of the Division and IBC member

Each chapter focused on one Article analyzing 3 questions:

1. Why is this Article in the Declaration?
2. What does the Article mean in the context of the Declaration?
3. How can the Article be applied?
INTERANTIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION
UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics
2003. UNESCO permanent Secretariat

Members: OHCHR, UNU, FAO, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, WIPO
Associate Members: ALECSO, CoE, EC, ICGEB, AU, OECD, WTO

Promotes coordination and cooperation in the activities and identifies areas of cooperation to enhance the impact of activities through coordinated and interactive approaches.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:
COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF CAPACITY BUILDING AND NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEES.

RECENT ISSUE:

The Economic and Social Council considered the issue of genetic privacy and non-discrimination at its 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2008 sessions. At its substantive session of 2008 the Council adopted the ECOSOC decision 2008/233 by which it:........relevant to genetic privacy and non-discrimination, and on a possible inter-agency coordination mechanism;
Report:

• Consultations with Member States on relevant developments in the field of genetic privacy and non-discrimination and on a possible inter-agency coordination mechanism.

• Consultation with other UN agencies, extended to other relevant intergovernmental organizations, on the implementation of activities relevant to genetic privacy and non-discrimination and on a possible inter-agency coordination mechanism.
The coherence of UNESCO’s Ethics Programme

Declarations

- Ethics teaching
- UNESCO Guides
- National Bioethics Committees
- Rotating conferences in Member States
- Publications & reports
- GEObs databases

- Normative standard - setting
- Capacity – building and application
- Awareness raising and public debate
ETHICS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Our website:

www.unesco.org/bioethics