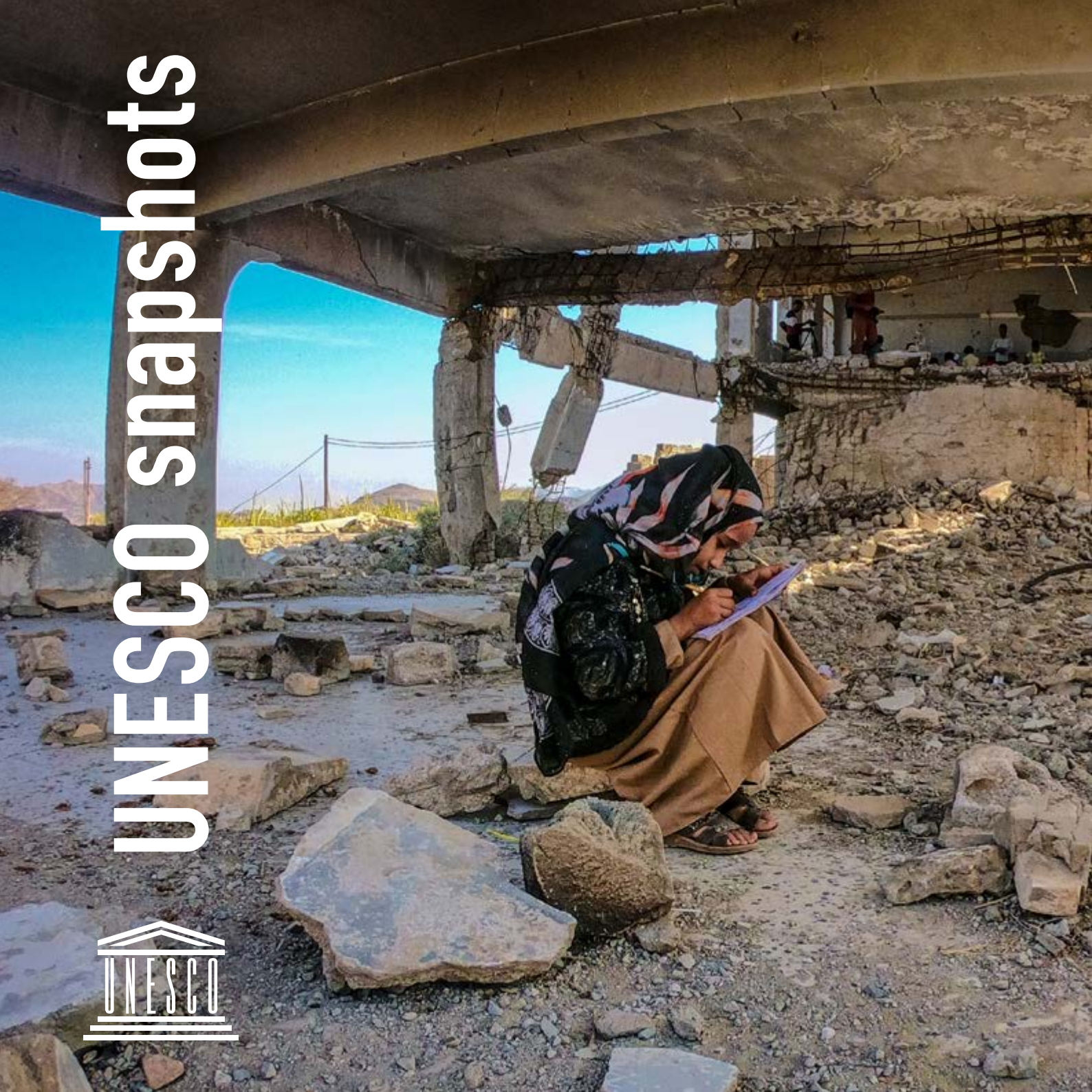




# UNESCO snapshots





GOBIERNO DE  
MÉXICO

CULTURA

RELACIONES EXTERIORES

INPI

EVENTO  
DE  
ALTO  
NIVEL

HIGH  
LEVEL  
EVENT



Construyendo un Decenio de Acciones  
para las Lenguas Indígenas  
Making a Decade of Action  
for Indigenous Languages



*Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, meets representatives of indigenous communities on her official visit to Mexico, as part of the High-Level Event 'Building a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages', which issued a strategic roadmap for the Decade (2022–2032).*

by Audrey Azoulay,  
Director-General of UNESCO

**‘Let us reaffirm the primacy of education, science, culture and knowledge to help us surmount crisis.’**

2020 will have been the year of unprecedented upheaval – the year of COVID-19. What began as a health crisis became systemic, with consequences that placed UNESCO at the very centre of intersecting efforts to develop urgent responses.

The closing of schools around the world forced more than 1.5 billion schoolchildren and students to stay at home at the height of the pandemic in 2020. It was the worst educational disruption in history, and we are still far from knowing the full measure of its long-term consequences. The world of culture was hit by the closure of cultural institutions, theatres and bookshops and the cancellation of festivals. In addition to the new ethical concerns arising from the uses of science and technology, in particular artificial intelligence, we must consider the issues surrounding freedom of information and the quality of information. We must also remember the ecological crisis, the backdrop of the breakdowns we have experienced recently. These last few months, the international community has had to address an unprecedented emergency. In the following pages, you will read how UNESCO has mobilized to support its Member States.

For example, in the field of education, UNESCO has set up a Global Coalition for Education to ensure the continuity of learning and to work towards the reopening of schools, paying special attention to girls, who are particularly at risk. Based on this experience, we are now preparing to draw lessons for reinforcing the long-term resilience of education systems, while also reflecting on the future of education.

Regarding the environment and biodiversity, UNESCO's unique network – its biosphere reserves, its international cooperation programmes on oceans, water and science – has proved once again how much it can contribute to addressing this crisis and those to come.

We have taken measures towards ensuring that the social sciences can achieve their real-time analysis of the situation in order to inform public policies, and that open science can benefit everyone. Lastly, we are drawing up the ethical principles needed to guarantee that artificial intelligence, which is now omnipresent, is respectful of the common good.

UNESCO has mobilized to protect cultural heritage from looting and to make certain that culture – in all its diversity, with all the essential and fundamental elements it brings into our lives – can rise up and reinvent itself.

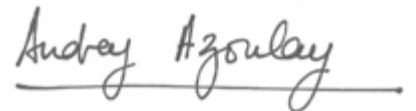
Finally, we have worked hard to promote transparent and accessible information, to support independent media and, more generally, to defend freedom of expression. We have seen just how crucial this is, particularly in these times of pandemic.

2020 is therefore a pivotal year.

It is a year that illustrates the role played by UNESCO for the common goods represented by education, culture, science and freedom of information.

It is also a pivotal year for multilateralism, which must be strengthened to respond effectively to global challenges. The examples you will find in these pages thus bear witness to the advancement of a multilateralism that is effective, concrete and at the service of the peoples of the world.

We hope you find this report an inspiring read!



Audrey Azoulay

# FACTS AND FIGURES



**193**  
Member States

**11** Associate  
Members



More than  
**136** institutes  
and Category 2 centres  
under the auspices of UNESCO  
around the world



**2,217**  
UNESCO staff  
of **171** nationalities  
working across **54** countries

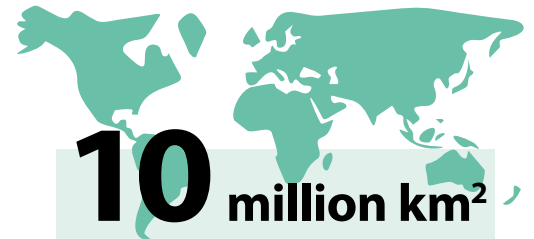


**56** %  
women  
among UNESCO  
personnel

**49%** women among  
UNESCO directors

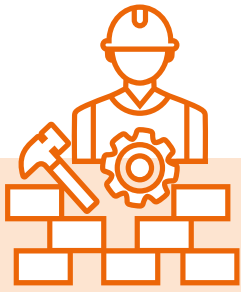


Over the last 40 years,  
UNESCO has mobilized some  
**US\$ 120 million**  
for over **2,000** projects  
for media development  
in more than **40** countries



**10** million km<sup>2</sup>  
of land protected by  
UNESCO designated sites  
including:

**714** Biosphere Reserves  
**161** Global Geoparks  
**1,121** World Heritage sites



Over **2,250**  
young people  
under 35  
already recruited to  
rehabilitate historic  
houses in **YEMEN**  
through UNESCO's  
'Cash for Work' project  
funded by the EU



More than  
**30** translations  
published to date  
of UNESCO's report  
*Journalism, Fake News  
and Disinformation*,  
released in 2018

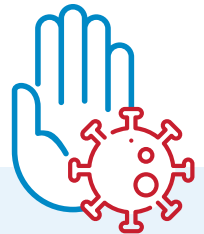


'Girls Back to School' global campaign:

**6 million views** of the video  
**360 million people**  
reached on social media



Over **60** million  
open-access records of  
**135,000** different  
marine species  
already integrated, cleared and  
made public under  
IOC-UNESCO's Ocean Biodiversity  
Information System



More than  
**580** video clips  
from **54** African  
countries shared through  
the 'Don't Go Viral'  
global campaign  
reaching 220 million hits on  
Facebook and Twitter



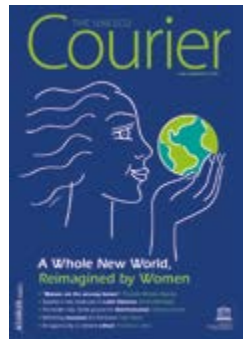
1970–2020: UNESCO celebrates  
**50** years of action  
against the illicit trafficking  
of cultural property

As the United Nations intellectual agency, UNESCO encourages international cooperation in science, education, culture and information to meet the challenges of our times and bring people together around common goods.



## Response to COVID-19

Long-term responses to the COVID-19 crisis involve research, innovation and information exchange. UNESCO has mobilized towards this aim by publishing real-time statistics, providing Member States with distance learning strategies and solutions, developing practical guides on returning to school, launching a global campaign against disinformation, calling for open science and supporting creative industries. More than ever, the world needs to focus on innovation, culture and the sharing of knowledge.



## Global standards

UNESCO has continued to develop international standards with two important proposal texts to be adopted by Member States. The first is a recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence, to ensure that technological advances are at the service of humans. The second is a recommendation on open science, which can redraw the contours of future scientific cooperation.



## Major campaigns for education, heritage and the planet

The flagship initiative 'Reviving the Spirit of Mosul' takes an important step with the launch of the international architectural competition for the reconstruction of the Al-Nouri Mosque. UNESCO is also mobilizing to support the city of Beirut, damaged by a double explosion. In 2020, UNESCO celebrates 50 years of the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods and has launched the vast initiative for biodiversity 'Our Common House', using all of its programmes for the preservation of the environment and the ocean, and nature education. In addition, UNESCO leads the world's largest conversation on rethinking the future of education.

## HIGHLIGHTS

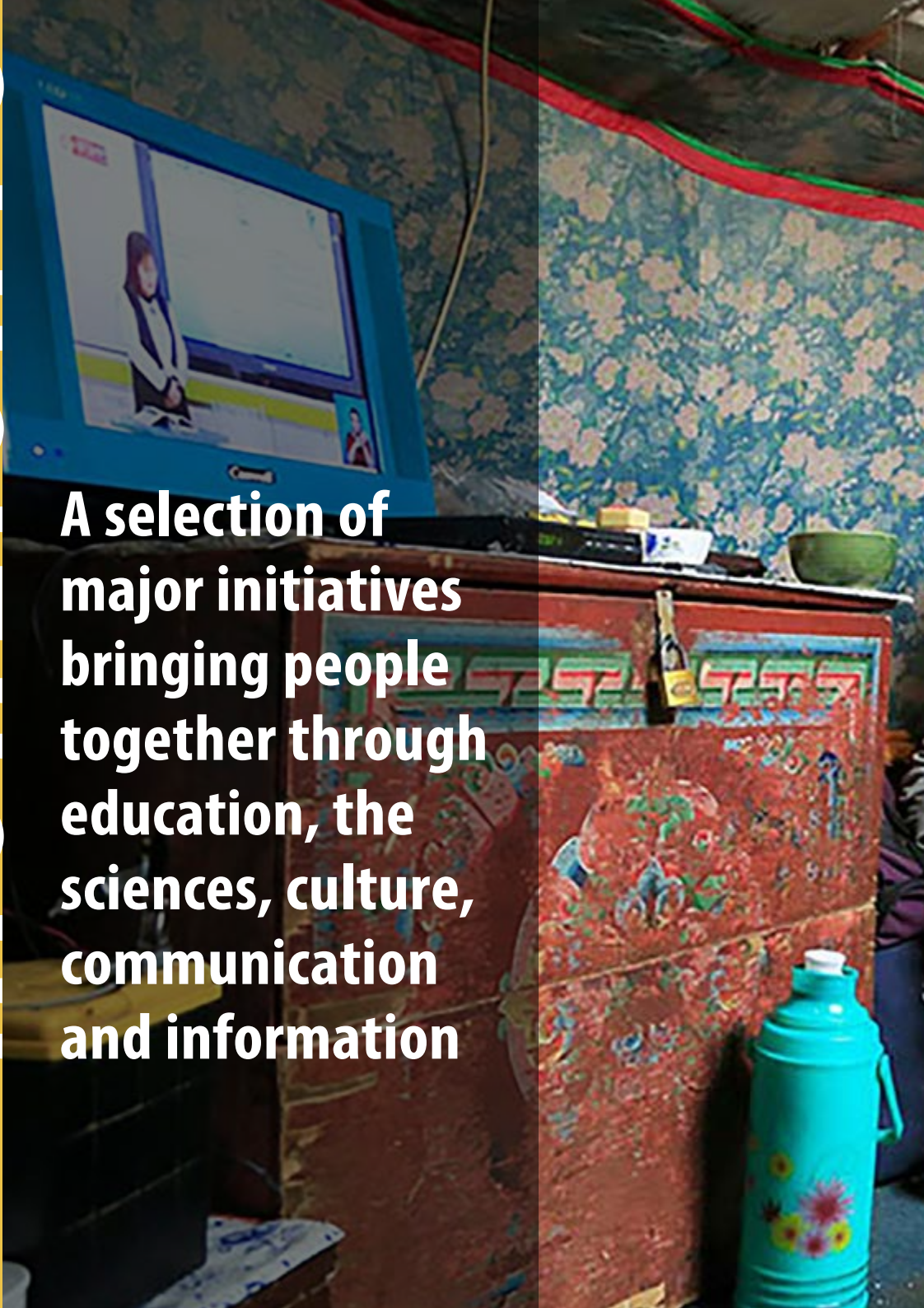
- 1** UNESCO leads global education response to COVID-19
- 2** Over 150 partners join the Global Education Coalition
- 3** Promoting press freedom 'without fear or favour'
- 4** Countering the 'disinfodemic' with facts, science and information
- 5** UNESCO rallies international community to safeguard Beirut's education, cultural life and heritage
- 6** UNESCO's celebrity advocates join forces against racism
- 7** Progress towards the first global normative instrument on AI ethics
- 8** UNESCO steps up efforts for open science
- 9** 'Revive the Spirit of Mosul' initiative makes steady progress
- 10** Supporting artists, living heritage and creativity beyond COVID-19
- 11** UNESCO rallies international community for the Ocean Decade
- 12** 50 years of combating illicit trafficking of cultural property

## STORIES from the field

- Global Education Coalition provides zero-rated internet access in Senegal and other African countries
- Sustainability initiatives improve lives in Costa Rica and Uzbekistan
- Lake Chad initiative creates green jobs for local communities
- New Zealand, India, Ecuador and Colombia enhance their tsunami readiness
- UNESCO cities mobilize against COVID-19
- UNESCO supports Indian film on domestic violence during the COVID-19 crisis
- Jobs for young people to restore heritage in Yemen
- UNESCO combats Holocaust denial, antisemitism and genocide

# HIGHLIGHTS

**A selection of major initiatives bringing people together through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information**







*A Mongol family watching educational programmes on television. When COVID-19 closed schools, the Mongolian Government took immediate action to provide distance learning, with UNESCO's assistance. Lessons in Mongolian, Kazakh, Tuvan and sign language were made available to students, parents and teachers and delivered daily on 16 different channels.*

© Mongolian Ministry of Education and Science

# UNESCO leads global education response to COVID-19

1

On 4 March 2020, UNESCO came out with the first figures on school closures, warning that 290.5 million students were already affected. These statistics immediately captured wide media attention and signaled the onset of an historic disruption to education.

‘We are working with countries to assure the continuity of learning for all, especially disadvantaged children and youth who tend to be the hardest hit by school closures,’ said UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay at the time. ‘The global scale and speed of the current educational disruption is unparalleled and, if prolonged, could threaten the right to education.’

Three weeks later, the figure had shot up to nearly 1.6 billion students – 767 million of them girls – in more than 190 countries, or 94 per cent of the world’s student population. As of late October 2020, schools were still closed in 31 countries, affecting 585 million students.

From the start of the crisis, UNESCO and its Institute for Statistics have tracked school closures as well as reopenings and monitored policy responses deployed to mitigate their effects, through several surveys. UNESCO tracks the extent and geographic spread of school closures, their timing and duration, and the number of students affected by level of education and gender. The data are displayed on a downloadable interactive map, updated weekly. These data have been widely cited in the media and are being used by partners in their responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

In August, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched the ‘Education in the time of COVID-19 and beyond Policy Brief’, which pointed to UNESCO’s projections whereby 24 million learners from pre-primary to tertiary education risked not finding their way back to their studies in 2020 following the COVID-19-induced closures. The largest share of learners at risk, 5.9 million, live in South and West Asia, and another 5.3 million are in sub-Saharan Africa. Both regions faced severe educational challenges even before the pandemic.

The most vulnerable populations face the greatest risk, and particularly girls. Over 11 million girls may not have returned to school at all in 2020. This alarming number not only threatens decades of progress made towards gender equality, but also puts girls around the world at risk of adolescent pregnancy, early and forced marriage, and violence.

UNESCO led the drafting of the Brief, which calls for protecting investment in education at all levels. It cites new research from UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, which shows that school closures due to COVID-19 are projected to increase the annual funding gap for education in poorer countries to as much as US\$200 billion per year. However, investing now in re-enrolment and remediation programmes could reduce the additional funding gap by 75 per cent.

The Global Education Meeting in October brought together 11 Heads of State and 70 countries to prioritize recovery of education through stimulus packages.

**An empty classroom in Gambia.  
Everywhere in the world, measures  
to contain COVID-19 prevented  
children from going to school.**

© Shutterstock / DorSteffen

### Global monitoring of school closures caused by COVID-19



● Partially open ● Closed due to COVID-19 ● Fully open ● Academic break

Visualize evolution  
over time



24/04/2020



**1,480,292,206**  
affected learners

**84.5%** of total  
enrolled learners

**166** country-wide  
closures

*Map of the world depicting  
school closures in April 2020  
at the pandemic's peak.  
The data was provided by  
the UNESCO Institute for  
Statistics, which came out  
with the first figures on  
school closures in March 2020.*

© UNESCO



MORE THAN  
**11 MILLION**  
GIRLS  
ARE AT  
**RISK**  
OF NOT GOING  
BACK TO  
**SCHOOL.**

Young girls in a classroom.  
The image illustrates the  
UNESCO advocacy campaign  
#LearningNeverStops, launched  
during the COVID-19 crisis to raise  
awareness of the importance  
of girls' inclusion in education:  
'If girls lose out, we all lose out.'

© UN Photo / Marco Dormino

# Over 150 partners join the Global Education Coalition

2

In March 2020, when the majority of the world's students were affected by COVID-19 school closures, UNESCO launched the Global Education Coalition (GEC), one of the most ambitious partnerships in its history. 'Never before have we witnessed educational disruption on such a scale,' said UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay at the launch. 'Partnership is the only way forward. This Coalition is a call for coordinated and innovative action to unlock solutions that will not only support learners and teachers now, but through the recovery process, with a principal focus on inclusion and equity.'

The Coalition comprises 150 institutional partners that stepped forward to contribute their expertise and competences. UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed expressed the UN's full commitment: 'For millions of children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, school closures could mean the loss of a vital safety net,' she said. 'This is not a time to deepen inequalities. It is a time to invest in education's power to transform.' Multilateral partners include ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, ITU as well as the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, OECD and Asian Development Bank.

From the private sector, Microsoft, GSMA, Weidong, Google, Facebook, Zoom, KPMG and Coursera have also joined. Philanthropic and non-profit organizations include Khan Academy, Dubai Cares, Profuturo and Sesame Street. Among media partners, the BBC World Service, France Médias Monde and

the European Broadcasting Union are among those producing learning contents and amplifying campaigns.

The GEC has quickly become an essential platform to support learning continuity. It is designed to be flexible and agile, and its diversified actions are adapted to countries' specific needs, from expanding access to distance learning platforms to training teachers. Coalition members are active in 70 countries, rallying around three flagships – achieving universal connectivity, valorizing teachers and addressing the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 crisis. Through the GEC, UNESCO is also conducting the #LearningNeverStops campaign focused on 'keeping girls in the picture' and safeguarding progress made on gender equality in education. It has produced a set of advocacy toolkits, including the *Building Back Equal: Girls Back to School Guide*.

A Global Skills Academy has also been established to equip 1 million youth with digital skills, with Coalition partners Coursera, Dior, Festo, Huawei, IBM, Microsoft, Orange Digital Centres and PIX, alongside WorldSkills International and the ILO, ITU and OECD. The Academy operates in synergy with UNESCO's global network of technical and vocational education and training institutions, UNEVOC.

World leaders have responded positively to the Coalition's mission and to its first progress report, presented at a UNESCO side event during UNGA 75. Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, described the GEC as 'a paradigm of global solidarity and renewed multilateralism.'

UP TO  
130  
MILLION  
GIRLS  
ARE ALREADY  
OUT OF  
SCHOOL  
BEFORE THE  
COVID-19 CRISIS.



*Colombian investigative journalist Jineth Bedoya Lima was awarded the 2020 UNESCO/ Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize for her fearless reporting on her country's armed conflict and on violence against women.*

© UNESCO

# Promoting press freedom 'without fear or favour'\*

UNESCO's 2020 flagship event to celebrate World Press Freedom Day (3 May) took place on 9 to 10 December<sup>1</sup>, when UNESCO and the Netherlands held the World Press Freedom Conference 2020, which also marked International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (2 November). The conference was organized under the theme 'Journalism without Fear or Favour' in an innovative, interactive digital format and attracted thousands of viewers worldwide. It featured leading journalists including Christiane Amanpour, Maria Ressa, Carole Cadwalladr, Carmen Aristegui, Lina Attalah and Yalda Hakim.

Earlier in 2020, on 4 May, at an 'Online High-Level Dialogue on Press Freedom and Tackling Disinformation in the COVID-19 Context', UN Secretary-General António Guterres, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet made a strong case for independent, fact-based journalism, all the more crucial in times of crisis.

The livestreamed event brought together prominent journalists and representatives of civil society and the media and tech industry. 'It takes journalism to communicate the findings of scientists and disseminate real and reliable information and counter fake news that is dangerous to people's lives and to efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic,' said Ms Azoulay.

The 2020 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, presented on the Day, went to investigative journalist Jineth Bedoya Lima from Colombia. Despite being subjected to harassment, assault and abduction, she has continued steadfastly to report on her country's armed conflict and on sexual violence against women.

The relevance of UNESCO's research, capacity-building and awareness-raising on the safety of women journalists was highlighted in *Combating Violence against Women Journalists*, the annual report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, released in July. It draws attention, for instance, to UNESCO's study on countering online violence against women journalists, to be published in the first half of 2021.

On 24 September 2020, UNESCO and the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) launched a global survey to assess the scale and impact of online violence targeting women journalists around the world, and to identify potential solutions.

A new UNESCO report on another timely topic, *Safety of Journalists Covering Protests – Preserving Freedom of the Press during Times of Civil Unrest*, was released in September. It documents the sharp increase of incidents during protests in which police and security forces violated media freedom in 2020: from 15 protests involving such incidents in 2015 to 32 in 2019. The report provides recommendations for all actors to ensure better protection for journalists covering protests.

**Promoting the safety of journalists and combating impunity for those who attack them are central elements within UNESCO's support for press freedom on all media platforms. Coverage of Labour Day demonstrations in Paris, France.**

© Shutterstock / Alexandros Michailidis

\* The theme of the 2020 World Press Freedom celebration was 'Journalism without Fear or Favour', a phrase coined by Adolph S. Ochs, founder of the modern *New York Times*.

1. Postponement due to the COVID-19 context.

# Countering the 'disinfodemic' with facts, science and information

4

False or misleading information about COVID-19 has surged around the world during the pandemic eroding public trust, widening social divides, hurting public health outcomes and compromising long-term human rights advances. 'Since the onset of this pandemic, societies have become especially vulnerable to fake news and rumours. Our efforts to guarantee access to reliable, high quality information not only protect people from a life-threatening disease, they are also a critical component of peace building,' said Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General.

UNESCO is fighting the COVID-19 'disinfodemic' by promoting freedom of expression, access to reliable information and quality news coverage. In April 2020, UNESCO published two policy briefs on types of COVID-19 disinformation and responses to it. Linked to World Press Freedom Day 2020, UNESCO released a brief on *Journalism, Press Freedom and COVID-19*, which complemented a high-level dialogue on the theme.

UNESCO has developed a wide range of resources to counter the COVID-19 disinfodemic. For media development actors, the Organization created an online platform of selected responses to COVID-19, presenting examples of communication and information actions. In May, UNESCO, together with WHO and the Knight Center for Journalism, offered a massive online open course (MOOC) for journalists, providing them with knowledge and fact-checking tools to cover the health crisis; 9,000 journalists and communication professionals from 162 countries enrolled in this MOOC, now available in six languages. This work has been strengthened through a project supported by the European Union on '#Coronavirus Facts: Addressing the COVID-19 disinfodemic in conflict-prone countries'.

For judges and other judicial actors, UNESCO led a series of webinars and created a set of guidelines regarding respect of freedom of expression, access to information and safety of journalists during the pandemic.

To reach the general public, and particularly young people, UNESCO launched two major social media campaigns: #ThinkBeforeSharing, which promotes media and information literacy as a tool to resist conspiracy theories; and #Don'tGoViral, a campaign with crowdsourced and local openly licensed content to inform African communities about COVID-19. In addition, UNESCO produced a series of audio messages and videos that can be downloaded freely and used by radio and television stations around the world.

At UNGA 75, UNESCO, together with WHO and other UN agencies and partners, issued a joint statement calling on countries to develop action plans to promote timely dissemination of science-based information, and to prevent the spread of false information while respecting freedom of expression. Following these activities, in September, the Broadband Commission, co-chaired by UNESCO, launched a comprehensive report on *Countering Digital Disinformation while Respecting Freedom of Expression*. In October, UNESCO partnered with UNDP to launch an online consultation to coordinate global efforts to combat disinformation. The consultation, 'Forging a Path for a Better Information Ecosystem: Effective Governance, Media, Internet and Peacebuilding Responses to Disinformation' gathered evidence and perspectives from hundreds of researchers, UN agencies, civil society groups and other key stakeholders. As the virus continues to spread, UNESCO will maintain its efforts to counter the COVID-19 disinfodemic.

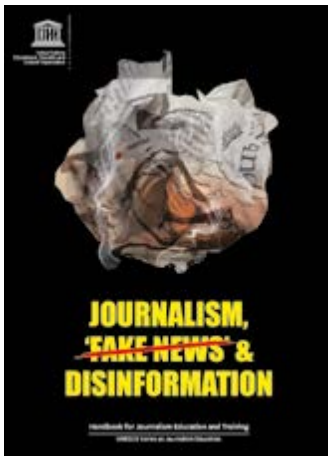






*From left, drawings by Rapé (Fake News) and Ares (Caricature). A collection of cartoons about press freedom and fighting disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic, put together by UNESCO and Cartooning for Peace, was made available for sharing on line to celebrate 2020 World Press Freedom Day.*

*© Cartooning for Peace / Rapé / Ares*



*Written by experts on fighting disinformation, this UNESCO journalism handbook explores such topics as thinking critically about digital technology and social platforms; media and information literacy; fact-checking; and combating online abuse. Over 30 translations have been published to date.*

© UNESCO

ARES.

# UNESCO rallies international community to safeguard Beirut's education, cultural life and heritage

In the wake of the double explosion that devastated Beirut on 4 August 2020, UNESCO's Director-General Audrey Azoulay visited the city to rally the international community and launch the Li Beirut (For Beirut) initiative, which aims to ensure that education, culture and heritage are the main pillars of the city's reconstruction. 'UNESCO, of which Lebanon is a founding member, stands at your side to support the city's recovery,' she declared.

The blast that killed hundreds of people and left thousands injured also inflicted severe damage on schools and some of Beirut's most treasured historical neighbourhoods, major museums, galleries and religious sites, at a time when Lebanon was already facing other crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Initial assessments revealed that the blasts had damaged 8,000 buildings, including 640 historic buildings; 160 schools were damaged or destroyed, affecting 85,000 students. An estimated US\$500 million will be needed for heritage and creative economy and another US\$22.5 million for education.

On 10 and 27 August, UNESCO took the first steps to ensure that Beirut's rich cultural life and heritage continues to serve as a source of resilience for the Lebanese people. UNESCO convened a series of online coordination meetings bringing together leading heritage and cultural organizations and experts from Lebanon and elsewhere to coordinate emergency and longer-term measures. A third coordination meeting was held on 22 October.

According to priorities identified by Lebanese experts, stakeholders and counterparts, UNESCO developed the International Action Plan for Culture. It comprises immediate

interventions to safeguard Beirut's historic urban fabric and heritage sites; support to artists and other cultural actors to revive Beirut's cultural life; and medium-term initiatives to assist the city's sustainable reconstruction and recovery through culture.

In addition, the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund allocated US\$100,000 to ensure the urgent securing of two historic buildings in the most affected areas.

On the educational front, while spearheading the UN response prioritizing funding for schooling and distance learning, UNESCO committed to rehabilitating 40 schools with funds it had already raised through its international fundraising appeal, #Li Beirut. 'We must focus on education, because it is a major concern for families and it is where Lebanon's future will be played out,' said the Director-General.

An emergency meeting of UNESCO's newly-formed Global Education Coalition was held on 1 September, with 80 partners attending. Commitments span rehabilitation of schools, technical assistance to teachers, access to distance learning platforms, provision of content and support to higher education. Among the contributions, Education Above All pledged US\$10 million towards reconstruction of schools and universities, and Uber donated 5,000 rides for relief efforts and delivery of education kits.

As part of its Li Beirut effort, UNESCO hosted three virtual ResiliArt Lebanon debates, focused on 'Defending Cultural Diversity through Creativity', 'Museums and Art Galleries for the Return of Cultural Life in Beirut' and 'Bridging the Past and Future through Built Heritage'. Beirut is a member of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network.





**UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, Director of the Arab Center for Architecture George Arbid and Director-General of the Directorate-General of Antiquities Sarkis Khoury during Ms Azoulay's two-day visit to Beirut in August 2020 to drum up international support for the recovery of the devastated city.**



# united against racism



*Leading personalities joined UNESCO's Director-General to condemn discrimination in the video United Against Racism: (from top left) Freida Pinto, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Forest Whitaker, Naomi Campbell, UNESCO Artist for Peace Gilberto Gil, UNESCO Champion for Girls' and Women's Education Nadia Nadim, Bobi Wine, Rossy de Palma, UNESCO Artist for Peace Marcus Miller, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Jean-Michel Jarre, Charlotte Gainsbourg, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Yalitza Aparicio, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Sumaya bint Al Hassan, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Herbie Hancock, Ada Hegerberg and Jorge Ramos.*

© UNESCO



# UNESCO's celebrity advocates join forces against racism

6

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the international community has witnessed the stigmatization of populations of Asian origin or appearance. The #IAmNotAVirus movement rose to combat hate speech, followed by #BlackLivesMatter, an urgent call for racial justice for people of African descent. Yet the xenophobic rhetoric used by leaders and populist groups has galvanized extreme right-wing movements and inspired racist messages advocating violence all over the world.

Since its creation 75 years ago, UNESCO has worked vigorously to promote the fundamental idea that 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,' as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A highlight of UNESCO's campaign for diversity and non-discrimination in 2020 was the August release of *United against Racism*, a 2' 41" video available on YouTube. It features sixteen prominent international personalities from film, music, media, sports and science.

Racism is not something from the past, it still exists, explains Charlotte Gainsbourg in its opening sequence. World War II and the Holocaust took place less than a century ago, recalls Freida Pinto. Apartheid was a reality until 1991, adds Jean-Michel Jarre.

Other voices chime in as the film continues: Racism is caused by fear and ignorance of what is different. By defending quality education for all and inclusion, we can combat the root causes of deadly prejudices. By encouraging cultural diversity, we can build societies that are more respectful of others.

The participants, most of whom are UNESCO celebrity advocates, also include Sumaya bint Al Hassan, Yalitza Aparicio, Naomi Campbell, Rossy de Palma, Amadou Gallo Fall, Gilberto Gil, Herbie Hancock, Ada Hegerberg, Marcus Miller, Nadia Nadim, Jorge Ramos, Forest Whitaker and Bobi Wine.

UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay delivered the same unequivocal message for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, commemorated on 21 March. 'As the events of recent months have shown all too often, in particular during the COVID-19 crisis, racist ideologies, hate speech, scapegoating and the deadly acts that result from them continue to jeopardize world peace,' she said. 'Combating racism is part of our commitment to human dignity.'

From April to September 2020, UNESCO organized 15 webinars on 'Inclusion in the time of COVID-19' aiming to discuss measures to address the COVID-19 crisis at the global and local levels. The focus was on social dimensions of 'leaving no one behind' and on actions taken to fight against the growing number of incidents of racism and discrimination. They were held in the context of UNESCO's International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR.

And for the 2020 International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, observed on 25 March, an exhibit coproduced by UNESCO, 'Us and Them: From Prejudice to Racism', was displayed in the United Nations visitors' lobby in New York from 21 February until 4 May. The exhibit teaches that racism is a social construct that can be challenged at multiple levels.



# Progress towards the first global normative instrument on AI ethics

7

HEALTH

Fast-paced and revolutionary, the advances of artificial intelligence (AI) have already invaded many dimensions of our lives. AI has enormous potential for accelerating human progress and sustainable development.

At the same time, AI's rapid development raises ethical concerns on numerous issues, including bias and inequalities, access, capacity-building and education, freedom of expression, privacy, transparency, accountability and data ownership.

Applications have drawn on AI all the more since the outbreak of COVID-19, to accelerate vaccine research, for instance, and improve tracing of the virus. AI has helped develop telemedicine and distance learning; it has been used to operate drones to deliver medical supplies. But as the use of AI has spread, the need for a global regulatory instrument has become increasingly urgent.

At UNESCO's General Conference in November 2019, Member States decided the time had come to start preparing the first international standard-setting instrument on the ethics of AI. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres commended UNESCO for taking up the challenge. 'Artificial intelligence is a critical frontier issue for the whole UN system and the whole world,' he said.

Accordingly, in March 2020, UNESCO appointed 24 multidisciplinary experts on the social, economic and cultural implications of AI to develop a draft recommendation. To obtain the views of stakeholders, this was followed by a wide consultation process, involving experts from 155 countries, members of the public (through a global online survey),

UN agencies, private sector giants such as Google, Facebook and Microsoft, and academic authorities including Stanford University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The resulting draft recommendation was submitted on 17 September 2020 to UNESCO's 193 Member States. Negotiations and an information campaign will precede its planned final adoption by Member States at UNESCO's 41st General Conference in November 2021.

'We must make sure artificial intelligence is developed for us and not against us,' explained UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay. 'We need a robust base of ethical principles to ensure AI serves the common good. We have made this process as inclusive as possible since the stakes involved are universal.' The draft recommendation submitted to the international community establishes several overarching concepts, namely proportionality, human oversight and determination, stewardship of the environment and peace, and gender inclusion. The UNESCO Recommendation will define shared values and principles, and identify concrete policy measures on the ethics of AI. If adopted, it will serve as an ethical compass and a global normative foundation to build strong respect for the rule of law in the digital world.

Due to its interdisciplinary vocation, its mandate in the ethics of science and technology, and its humanistic values, UNESCO is the ideal venue to discuss AI and its impact on the future of humanity. Standard-setting represents one of UNESCO's main constitutional functions.

**Artificial intelligence (AI) has enormous potential. It can be used as a tool to track pandemics like COVID-19, for instance. To address the grave ethical concerns it also raises, UNESCO is developing a global standard-setting instrument.**

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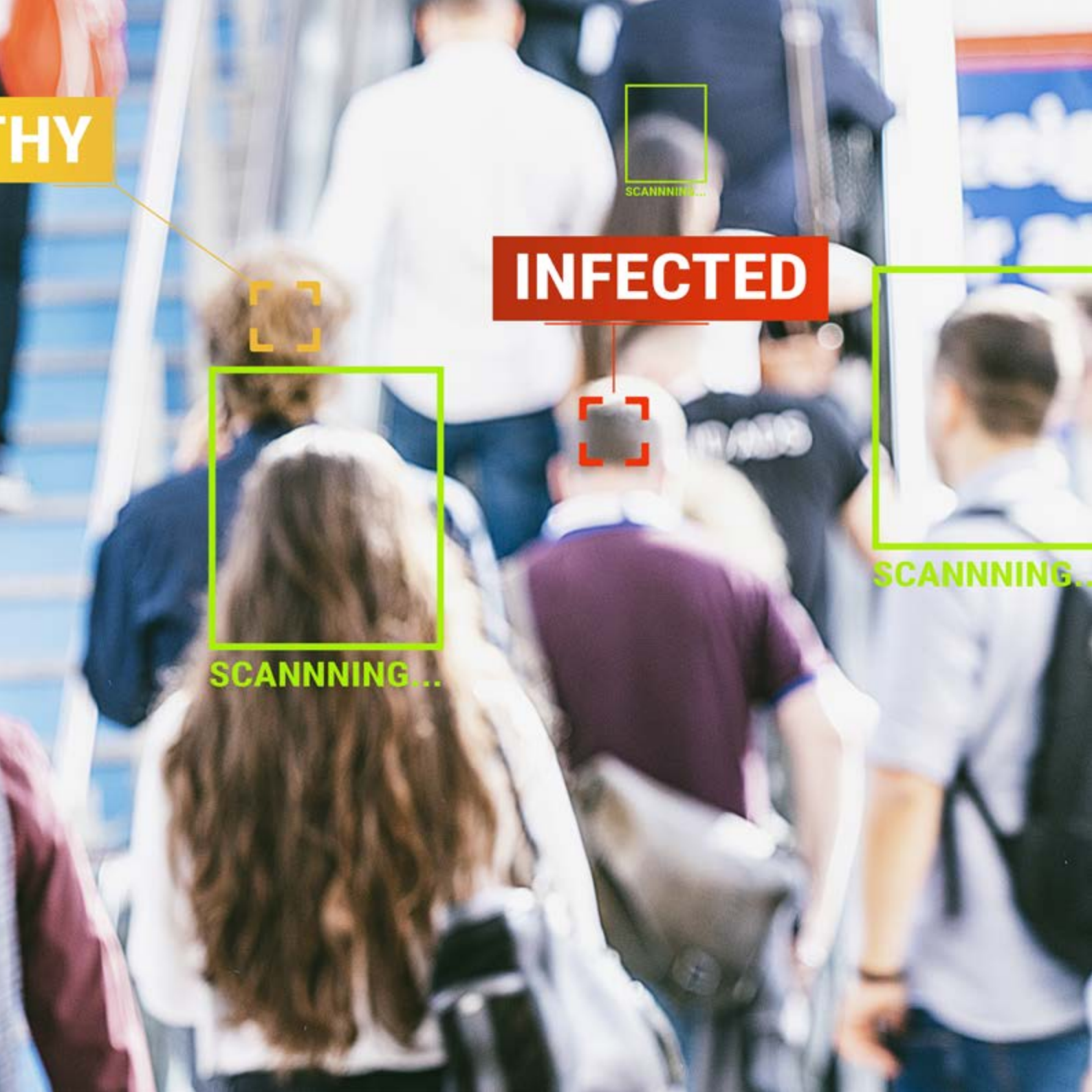
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# UNESCO steps up efforts for open science

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On 30 March 2020, as the pandemic spread around the world, UNESCO convened an online meeting of science ministers. The meeting focused on the role of international cooperation in science and the need for increased investment to deal with COVID-19.

The 210 participants from 122 countries included 77 ministers and deputy ministers, as well as Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth; Sarah Anyang Agbor, African Union Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology; Moisés Omar Hallelevens Acevedo, former Vice President of Nicaragua; and Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, the WHO's Chief Scientist. The discussion centred on open science – the key issue on which UNESCO is currently developing a legal instrument, namely an international recommendation.

As the UN agency with the relevant mandate, UNESCO promotes open science as the necessary approach to bridge the science, technology and innovation gaps between and within countries. 'The COVID-19 pandemic raises our awareness of the importance of science, both in research and international cooperation. The present crisis also demonstrates the urgency of stepping up information sharing through open science. The time has come for us to commit all together,' urged UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

The unprecedented mobilization of the world's scientific community against COVID-19 testifies to the value of science without borders. Boosting research spending and easing the rules to cope with the pandemic has spurred scientists to push the frontiers of discovery in pursuit of diagnostic technologies.

The ministerial meeting affirmed this global solidarity, not only to address the pandemic but also to tackle other pressing sustainability issues. As a follow-up, UNESCO and the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS) held a webinar on 'COVID-19 and Open Science' in Islamabad, inviting leaders of the scientific and research community, academia and government agencies. The panelists again concluded that an open science data platform is critical for evidence-based policy formulation, and concurred that besides the COVID-19 crisis, we also need to address climate, biodiversity, pollution, water and energy.

To build a global consensus, in line with the decision taken by UNESCO's General Conference in November 2019, the elaboration of a legal instrument, the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science, is relying on an inclusive and transparent consultative process involving all countries and regional perspectives.

A milestone was reached on 30 September 2020 when UNESCO submitted a draft Recommendation on Open Science to its 193 Member States, a major step in facilitating international cooperation and universal access to scientific knowledge. The draft proposes a definition of open science and its objectives, a framework of shared values and principles, and an outline of work to be done to enable societies to benefit from its vast potential, including indigenous knowledge systems. UNESCO's Member States are scheduled to adopt the final draft during their next General Conference in November 2021.

On 27 October, UNESCO, WHO and OHCHR issued a joint Declaration calling for open science, unhindered by barriers and frontiers.







*UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay attends a science class at Kabambare High School in Kinshasa (DRC) during her official visit to the Republic of the Congo and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in October 2020.*

© UNESCO

*The winners of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2020, Jennifer Doudna (USA) and Emmanuelle Charpentier (France), were also 2016 laureates of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards, for their pioneering work on genome editing technology.*

© Fondation L'Oréal



# 'Revive the Spirit of Mosul' initiative makes steady progress

UNESCO's flagship initiative 'Revive the Spirit of Mosul', launched in 2018 to support the recovery of one of Iraq's most important and historically significant cities, continued to make solid progress in 2020.

In November, UNESCO organized an international competition to select a design for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Al-Nouri Mosque complex, one of Mosul's major landmarks.

Located in the Old City, the 12th century ensemble includes the iconic 44-m leaning Al-Hadba Minaret, the Nouri Prayer Hall and several other buildings. Much of the complex was reduced to rubble during the city's three-year (2014–2017) occupation and devastation by violent extremists. The first phase of repair, which secured and stabilized key structures, was completed in January 2020.

UNESCO is helping restore other emblematic architectural treasures in Mosul, including the Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic church and the Dominican Al-Saa'a (Clock) church. Work has begun on Al-Aghawat Mosque, funded by Germany, and on Mosul's old houses, funded by the European Union. Projects incorporate skill development and job creation components to provide young Moslawis with a livelihood through heritage restoration.

The overall goal is to bring this rich and diverse city, with its pluralistic history at the crossroads of the cultures and religions of the Middle East, back to its former glory.

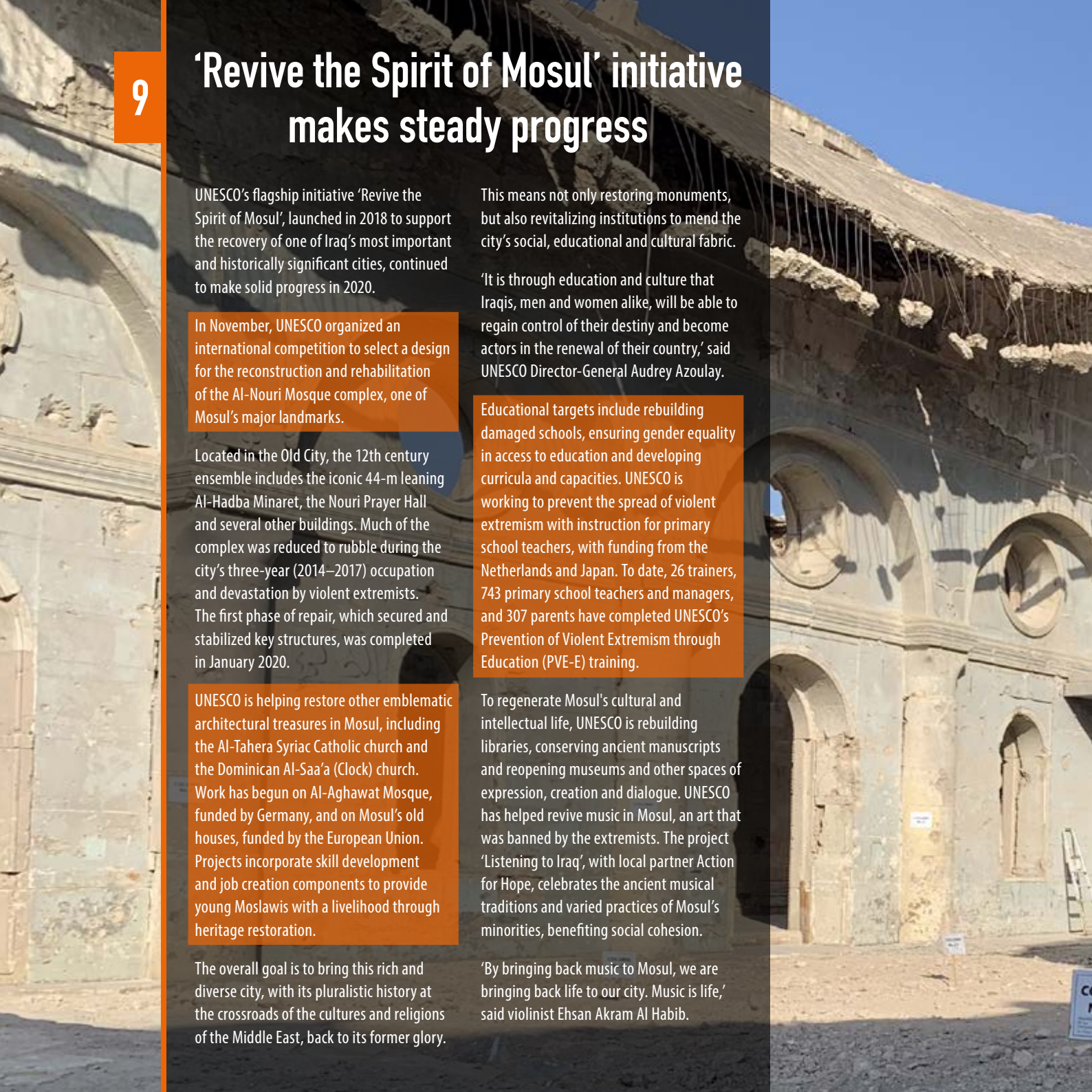
This means not only restoring monuments, but also revitalizing institutions to mend the city's social, educational and cultural fabric.

'It is through education and culture that Iraqis, men and women alike, will be able to regain control of their destiny and become actors in the renewal of their country,' said UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

Educational targets include rebuilding damaged schools, ensuring gender equality in access to education and developing curricula and capacities. UNESCO is working to prevent the spread of violent extremism with instruction for primary school teachers, with funding from the Netherlands and Japan. To date, 26 trainers, 743 primary school teachers and managers, and 307 parents have completed UNESCO's Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E) training.

To regenerate Mosul's cultural and intellectual life, UNESCO is rebuilding libraries, conserving ancient manuscripts and reopening museums and other spaces of expression, creation and dialogue. UNESCO has helped revive music in Mosul, an art that was banned by the extremists. The project 'Listening to Iraq', with local partner Action for Hope, celebrates the ancient musical traditions and varied practices of Mosul's minorities, benefiting social cohesion.

'By bringing back music to Mosul, we are bringing back life to our city. Music is life,' said violinist Ehsan Akram Al Habib.





*Rubble has been entirely removed at the Syriac Catholic Al-Tahera church in Mosul, Iraq. UNESCO has begun reconstruction of the building, severely damaged in 2017. Al-Tahera symbolizes the diversity that has prevailed in Mosul for centuries.*

© UNESCO /Anas Zeyad



COVID-19 had a worldwide impact on culture, with empty UNESCO World Heritage sites, cultural events cancelled, libraries closed and community cultural practices suspended. View of the futuristic Tianjin Binhai library in Tianjin, People's Republic of China, closed between January and March 2020, and receiving only 50 per cent of its usual 6,000 daily visitors thereafter.

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# Supporting artists, living heritage and creativity beyond COVID-19

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Around the world, COVID-19 has hit culture hard. Lockdown measures have barred visitors from UNESCO World Heritage sites, cancelled cultural events, closed museums, suspended community practices and cultural tourism, and left artists, institutions and site managers struggling to make ends meet. The virus has impeded access to culture when people need it most.

In response, UNESCO has sought to reinvest in international cooperation and intergovernmental dialogue, and to take concerted action to embed culture in the global policy response to the health crisis. UNESCO brought together over 130 Ministers of Culture for the UNESCO Online Meeting of Ministers of Culture on 22 April to discuss the measures their countries were taking to support culture and the creative economy. The meeting highlighted the urgent need to develop appropriate policies and actions. UNESCO also convened major regional intergovernmental organizations and development banks via videoconference on 17 April. Participants called for more data sharing, the identification of good practices and enhanced advocacy strategies.

UNESCO's weekly 'Culture & COVID-19: Impact and Response Tracker' provided regular updates on the impact of the crisis on culture and the measures countries and regions took in response. A new monthly Tracker continues to monitor the role of culture in public policy regarding the 2030 Agenda. As part of its advocacy efforts, UNESCO launched the ResiliArt movement – a campaign to give voice to artists and cultural professionals and raise global awareness of the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods.

Through virtual discussions with artists and cultural professionals, ResiliArt aims to contribute to the development of policies and financial mechanisms. By the end of October 2020, 208 debates had been held in over 70 countries.

On 28 September, UNESCO hosted an international debate on 'Culture, Tourism and COVID-19: Recovery, Resiliency and Rejuvenation' with global partners, experts and private sector representatives, who stressed the need to support the recovery of local communities.

UNESCO is also promoting access to culture online through the #ShareOurHeritage campaign. As part of this campaign, an interactive online exhibition, supported by Google Arts & Culture, offers virtual visits to dozens of World Heritage sites around the world.

Crucially, UNESCO has worked to offer policy guidelines and tools for decision-makers to respond to the pandemic's impact on culture. The new UNESCO publication *Culture in Crisis: Policy Guide for a Resilient Creative Sector* provides guidance on how to effectively integrate culture in COVID-19 recovery plans and rebuild the creative industries. The new UNESCO report *Museums around the World in the Face of COVID-19* offers a first evaluation of how the world's 95,000 museums have fared and the strategies museums have employed to remain engaged with their audiences. The publication *UNESCO Creative Cities' Response to COVID-19* showcases the various initiatives undertaken by Creative Cities worldwide that have leveraged the power of culture and creativity in response to the pandemic.



# UNESCO rallies international community for the Ocean Decade

'The science we need for the ocean we want' expresses the vision of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2017. UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO) is charged with the preparation of this pioneering initiative, which will start officially on 1 January 2021.

The Decade Implementation Plan was presented to Member States at the UN General Assembly session in September 2020. 'The Decade is a unique opportunity to engage the ocean science community in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals – globally, regionally and locally,' said Dr Vladimir Ryabinin, IOC-UNESCO Executive Secretary.

The Decade will make it possible to unlock innovative solutions for a healthier, more resilient and sustainable ocean.

As the global population is set to reach more than 9 billion people by 2050, the negative impact of human activities on the ocean can only escalate. We need to change how we finance and conduct ocean research, turning knowledge into sustainable solutions to understand and mitigate climate change; contribute to food security for hundreds of millions of people; spark innovation in renewable energy and cleaner marine transport; enhance the resilience of coastal communities; and help the world recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in a sustainable and equitable way by making informed decisions.

IOC-UNESCO's 2017 *Global Ocean Science Report* revealed that ocean science accounts for only between 0.04 and 4 per cent of total research and development expenditures worldwide. The Report's 2020 edition will serve as baseline to evaluate the progress of the Ocean Decade in boosting the required skills, capacity and international cooperation needed to develop the research and technologies that can connect ocean science with society's needs.

The Decade will also contribute to existing international frameworks aimed at protecting the ocean and its resources, such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the SAMOA Pathway in support of the Small Island Developing States, the UN Convention for the Law of the Sea, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and a future International Legally Binding Instrument for Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

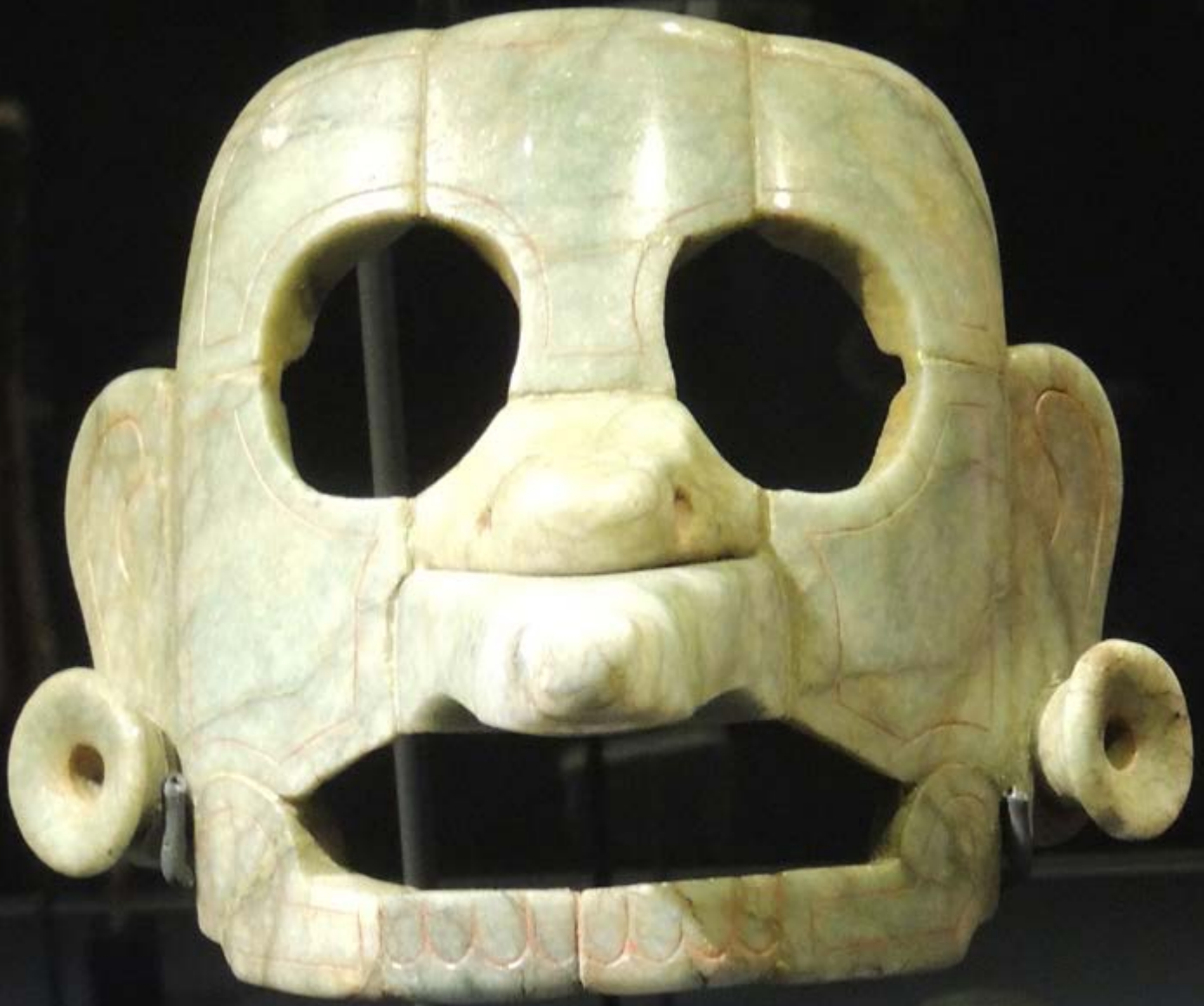
'The ocean is a new frontier – it covers 71 per cent of the globe yet we have explored less than five per cent,' said Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General. As the UN body responsible for fostering development of ocean knowledge and capacities among Member States, IOC-UNESCO promotes international cooperation in such areas as ocean observation, tsunami warnings and marine spatial planning, for the protection of our shared ocean and the benefit of society. Responsible for bringing all concerned actors to the Decade table, IOC-UNESCO has been consulting with leading global experts in ocean science, countries, regional organizations, civil society and businesses to ensure that together we can deliver the ocean we need for the future we want.





*Fishermen using traditional methods in Mirissa, Sri Lanka. The upcoming Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development will boost international cooperation to develop research and connect ocean science to people's need for marine resources.*

*© Unsplash / Daniel Klein*



*In September 2020, UNESCO welcomed Belgium's return to Guatemala of an ancient Mayan jade mask representing Chac, the god of rain and thunder. This archaeological treasure had been 'illegally exported by international traffickers', according to the Guatemalan foreign ministry.*



# 50 years of combating illicit trafficking of cultural property

In 2020, UNESCO is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

Adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 14 November 1970, this Convention provides an international framework for the prevention of theft and looting, and the return and restitution of stolen cultural property. After five decades, it remains a key instrument in the fight against illicit trafficking. 'This 50-year anniversary is a reminder that the illicit trafficking of cultural property deprives people of the heritage that underpins their identity and supports their development,' underlined Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General. 'We need to step up our efforts to enforce ethical standards in art markets and support countries as they work to safeguard heritage and combat illicit trade.'

Through the Convention, UNESCO has raised public awareness of illegal trafficking. It has also helped signatory countries, which now number 140, to draw up laws and preventive measures, and encouraged the restitution of illegally displaced property.

In June 2020, UNESCO organized an online meeting of world experts in the fight against the illicit traffic of cultural property, to examine the impact of COVID-19 on the problem and to consider responses to deal with the upsurge of thefts and trafficking. The experts recommended creating police units specialized in monitoring online platforms, in order to boost active

cooperation in countering illegal sales. They also called for a more systematic use of the tools created by UNESCO and its partners, such as the UNESCO List of National Cultural Heritage Laws, the ICOM Red Lists of cultural objects at risk and the INTERPOL Stolen Works of Art Database.

In October 2020, UNESCO launched an international communication campaign, 'The Real Price of Art', to remind the public that often the looting of archaeological sites, which fuels this traffic, is highly organized and constitutes a major source of financing for criminal and terrorist groups. Each campaign message tells the story of an antiquity stolen from a different region that could have ended up in an art lover's home.

The campaign kicked off with a series of events marking the anniversary, including the 8th session of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention (27–28 October); the first International Day against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property (14 November); and the international conference 'Cultural Heritage and Multilateralism: Regional and International Strategies for the Protection of Cultural Heritage' (16–18 November). The conference, held in partnership with the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, examined the situation by region and discuss solutions.

A special issue of *The UNESCO Courier*, available online, was also devoted to this topic in 2020.

**UNESCO has launched an international communication campaign to make the public aware of the devastation wreaked on the history and identity of peoples by the illicit trade in cultural goods.**

© UNESCO



# STORIES FROM THE FIELD

**A selection of  
tangible results  
and innovative  
solutions for  
peace and a  
sustainable future  
on the ground**





*Due to climate change, glaciers in the Andes have been retreating for decades, threatening local populations' water security. In 2020, the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean (IHP-LAC) coordinated several online seminars to feature ongoing glaciological research activities that are being carried out in Latin America through international cooperation.*

*View of the O'Higgins or Ventisquero glacier in Chile, featured in The Andean Glacier and Water Atlas, a UNESCO-GRID Arendal co-publication.*

© Andrés Rivera



*Within UNESCO's Global Coalition framework, a partnership between Senegal's Ministry of National Education, Huawei and Microsoft made it possible for 82,000 teachers and 500,000 learners to enroll on the ministry's Distance Learning Platform.*

© Shutterstock / Cecil Bo Dzwowa

## Global Education Coalition provides zero-rated internet access in Senegal and other African countries

More than 1.5 billion students and youth across the planet were affected by school and university closures due to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. To protect the right to education during the pandemic and beyond, UNESCO launched the Global Education Coalition, comprising over 150 private and public partners representing a wide range of expertise. The Coalition has been supporting countries in scaling up distance learning and reaching the children and youth most at risk, to ensure #LearningNeverStops.

Senegal, for example, like so many other countries in Africa and across the globe, saw its schools and universities shut their doors due to the health crisis. One basic challenge it faced in providing alternatives to in-person classes was the unequal access to equipment and connectivity throughout the country. Within the Coalition framework, a partnership between Senegal's Ministry of National Education, UNESCO and Coalition members Huawei and Microsoft made it possible for 82,000 teachers and 500,000 learners to enroll on the ministry's Distance Learning Platform; 3.5 million learners and teachers are expected to sign up with

support from Microsoft. In addition, UNESCO helped train 200 teachers to be 'master trainers', acquiring the digital skills needed for distance learning. They in turn will support and train other teachers, with the overall aim of benefiting 100,000 students in the country. Education minister Mamadou Talla welcomed the progress made. 'We have to diversify our training offers, our didactic and pedagogical methods, and try to bring them in line with today's world, where the digital technology plays a major role,' he said.

Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, Coalition member Orange has been providing free internet access to accredited learning platforms in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Similar packages are planned for Botswana, Cameroun, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Madagascar. The initiative is due to be extended to Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. 'Aiming towards connectivity for all is an important imperative, especially when our data shows that 43 per cent of the world's households do not have access to the internet,' said UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

# Sustainability initiatives improve lives in Costa Rica and Uzbekistan

In Costa Rica, an innovative recreational park has opened new horizons for people living with the dire social and environmental consequences of extreme poverty. Meanwhile, in Uzbekistan's Aral Desert, a programme that builds teachers' capacities, empowers communities and involves young people is encouraging the local population around the rapidly disappearing Aral Sea to adapt and live sustainably.

The two projects are separated by thousands of miles and diverse geography, but the common thread is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which imparts the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviour needed to think and act for a sustainable future. As the leading UN agency for ESD, UNESCO supports countries in developing education that incorporates crucial issues such as biodiversity and climate change.

ESD is the impetus for the 32-ha Parque La Libertad, in Patarrá, Costa Rica, which serves three communities where clean water is scarce and young people fall prey to gangs and drugs. Almost half of the population is under 40 and the school dropout rate is 54 per cent. The park, created by the Ministry of Culture and Youth in 2007,

offers access to cultural and recreational activities, technology and a clean environment, along with technical and other training opportunities, all with the aim of promoting social, economic and environmental change.

The same principles are at work in the 'Green Belt in Aral Desert' programme in Uzbekistan, launched in 2014, which connects a network of more than 20 higher education institutions and 50 research centres. So far it has boosted the capacities of more than 1 million youth, trained more than 100,000 people to plant forest on the dried seabed and developed more than 100 ecotourism routes. It has created a School of Young Farmers focused on sustainable land use and food security, and it runs rural schools using ICT to conduct lessons. Special attention has been paid to the Muynak people, a traditional fishing community living at the heart of the region. The project has provided 10,000 Muynak with clean water, along with training on water use and crop irrigation, as well as medical care.

Both the Parque La Libertad and 'Green Belt in Aral Desert' projects are past nominees for the annual UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which honours outstanding initiatives in the field.

*Outdoor activities at Parque La Libertad in Costa Rica, where people living with the social and environmental consequences of extreme poverty have found new hope and prospects. Its Environmental Management and Education Programme is one of the past years' nominees for the UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD.*

© Parque La Libertad





*UNESCO's Lake Chad BIOPALT project promotes sustainable management of natural resources through peace-building and nature-based solutions for community development.*

© UNESCO / Abou Hamdou

## Lake Chad initiative creates green jobs for local communities

For nearly 50 years, UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme has promoted a healthy balance between nature and human activities through its Biosphere Reserves. The BIOSphere and Heritage of Lake Chad (BIOPALT) project, for example, fosters the safeguarding and sustainable management of natural resources through peace-building and nature-based solutions for community development, with a special focus on women, youth and indigenous peoples.

The Lake Chad Basin, a 1,000-year-old civilization crossroads between West and Central Africa, supports more than 45 million people. Shared between Cameroon, Central African Republic, Niger, Nigeria and Chad, it abounds with exceptional biodiversity. Despite Lake Chad's recent increase in size, its ecosystems still face serious imbalances and frailty after it lost 90 per cent of its surface area between 1960 and 1985. Deforestation, drought and loss of biodiversity are exacerbated by conflicts causing disruptive population migrations.

Within the four-year BIOPALT project, launched in 2018, UNESCO works with Lake Chad communities, some of the poorest on the planet,

and applies the principles of the MAB programme to set up culturally appropriate income-generating activities (IGAs) based on green economy. These range from creating an early warning system for droughts and floods to reestablishing a fishing industry and producing alfalfa for the Kouri cow, an endemic species that plays an important role in social cohesion. In Niger, these IGAs strengthen the socio-economic resilience of nearly 30,000 people, including 13,000 women. Salamatou, a woman from the village of Boulangou Yakou, has been trained to produce Balanites (desert date) oil, a prized traditional commodity. 'It has changed my life. It allows me to be more self-sufficient and meet the basic needs of my family,' she says.

These diverse, locally managed green economies are now also cushioning Lake Chad communities from the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. 'The health crisis has made us realize how much our health depends on the environment,' says Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, an indigenous woman from the Mbororo pastoralist community in Chad and a member of the technical and scientific committee of the BIOPALT project.

# New Zealand, India, Ecuador and Colombia enhance their tsunami readiness

With sea level rise increasing the risk posed by tsunamis and other marine hazards, countries around the globe are taking steps to protect their populations. These efforts are coordinated through UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO).

This year, New Zealand initiated the deployment of a new network of DART (Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunami) buoys. These instruments, the most accurate to date, monitor changes in sea level and can detect a tsunami before it hits the coast. Until now, New Zealand had relied on a single, aging DART buoy.

The DART buoy network also provides tsunami monitoring and detection services for Pacific countries including Tokelau, Niue, the Cook Islands, Tonga and Samoa.

Elsewhere in the world, Venkatraipur and Noliassahi in India's Odisha State were the first communities in the Indian Ocean region to obtain, on 7 August 2020, Tsunami Ready international recognition,

the gold standard of tsunami preparedness recognition awarded by IOC-UNESCO. The check-list ranges from conducting public information campaigns to drawing up evacuation maps and installing a 24-hour early warning system.

'Our community would like to thank IOC-UNESCO for this recognition, and for enhancing the sustainability of our community against tsunami hazard,' said Appa Rao, Venkatraipur village's community leader.

Ecuador and Colombia also improved their national preparedness this year. The Government of Ecuador and IOC-UNESCO held an expert meeting in Guayaquil to assess tsunami threat for the coasts of northern Ecuador and southern Colombia. This will contribute substantially to local hazard assessment and community preparedness.

The Tsunami Ready Programme is a key contribution by IOC-UNESCO to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which begins on 1 January 2021.

*In 2020, New Zealand began deployment of a new network of DART buoys to monitor changes in sea level and detect a tsunami before it hits the coast. View of a high-risk area in Te Waewae Bay, New Zealand.*

© Shutterstock / Jacinto Marabel Romo



## Chicago



*An outdoor digital advertisement about social distancing during the COVID-19 outbreak in Chicago, USA, in March 2020.*

## Beijing



*Over 50,000 doctors from public hospitals in Beijing, People's Rep. of China, offer since January 2020 free consultations related to coronavirus on WeDoctor – a private medical care platform.*

## Rome



*In Rome, Italy, the international cinema festival 'Alice nella città' launched the 'Cinema da casa' initiative projecting movies on buildings so people could watch from home.*

## UNESCO cities mobilize against COVID-19

Cities, home to more than half the world's population, have been at the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet in addition to being the hardest hit, they have also been the places where innovative solutions have been tested and implemented. UNESCO's city networks – including the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR) and the Creative Cities Network (UCCN) – devised creative ways to help their inhabitants, particularly the most vulnerable, to cope with the crisis.

In the United States, an online platform, 'COVID-19: What Mayors Need to Know', was created by the U.S. Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination (one of the seven regional coalitions of UNESCO's ICCAR) to provide resources and guidelines. In New York City, all residents got access to free Coronavirus testing. Special measures went into effect for people without health insurance or at risk of discrimination. Mayor Bill de Blasio activated the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund to support New Yorkers, notably health care workers and essential staff, small businesses, displaced hourly workers and youth.

Boston's mayor Marty Walsh led interventions by the city's agencies on housing, public health, human services and public safety, including emergency shelter, day centres and community meal sites for the homeless. Chicago offered a Coronavirus Response Center, a one-stop online resource for its inhabitants, including immigrant communities. In San Francisco, Mayor London Breed placed a moratorium on home evictions. Mayor Eric Garcetti in Los Angeles had park recreation centres converted into temporary shelter for the homeless, installing 360 hand-washing stations and 120 mobile bathrooms.

Rabat and Essaouira in Morocco, Sidon and Byblos in Lebanon and Alexandria in Egypt – all members of the Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance, a regional coalition also part of UNESCO's ICCAR – concentrated their efforts on protecting citizens most at risk. Special services provided, using both public and private funds, included food delivery to unemployed workers, home medical visits for the elderly, free internet and advice hotlines run by mental health professionals.



## Llíria



*During the lockdown, musicians played from their balconies in Llíria, Spain. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony resonated particularly as a symbol of unity and hope.*

© #LliriaCityOfMusic / YouTube

## Bogotá



*During the six-month national lockdown, Bogotá, Colombia, made its library resources available through its BiblioRed network. View of Bogotá's public library Virgilio Barco.*

© Bilingual Librarian

## Wonju



*Korean public libraries have closed down to COVID-19, yet the 'book drive-through' service initiated by the Creative City of Wonju, as seen here, has allowed readers to borrow books from their car.*

© Wonju City Central Library, 2020

Responses were developed using the *Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities*, published in 2019 by UNESCO and the European Training and Research Center for Human Rights and Democracy. This confirms the utility of the Toolkit as a reference guide 'by Arab cities, to Arab cities', presenting policy models and hands-on guidance cities can benefit from in times of crisis.

In response to the pandemic, many of the 246 members of the UCCN turned to culture and creativity to boost people's well-being. Beijing in the People's Republic of China, a Creative City of Design, used its creative and technological potential and initiated an 'Online Medical Consultation Platform for COVID-19', thereby providing its inhabitants virtual and safe access to medical services, and reducing the risk of cross infection. In Rome, Italy, Creative City of Film, the 'Cinema da casa' project rallied confined citizens around cinema, animating the city with nightly film projections on building facades during its lockdown. Llíria in Spain, a Creative City of Music, launched the social media campaign #WindowsOfMusicAndHope. Musicians gave concerts on their balconies to cheer up their fellow citizens, setting the example for other Creative Cities around the world. The Creative Cities of Wonju, Republic of Korea and Bogota, Colombia, made their library resources available despite social distancing, the first with a 'book drive-through' plan and the second through its virtual BiblioRed media library.

UNESCO has further compiled a wide diversity of innovative and culture-led responses from Creative Cities in a publication, *UNESCO Creative Cities' Response to COVID-19*, which is available in English, French, Spanish and Chinese. The UCCN also organized, in collaboration with Beijing, the 3rd Creative Cities Beijing Summit. It brought together diverse participants to discuss and share good practices, illustrating how culture and creativity, fused with technology and innovation, have allowed cities to become more resilient and sustainable in the face of COVID-19.

In June 2020, the UNESCO Cities Platform<sup>1</sup>, which gathers eight UNESCO networks and programmes, organized an online meeting 'Urban Solutions: Learning from Cities' Response to COVID-19' bringing together various urban stakeholders to discuss and support local decision-makers and urban actors in dealing with the multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. 'Precisely because cities concentrate people, resources and activities, they will undoubtedly be one of the driving forces behind our recovery,' as UNESCO Deputy Director-General Xing Qu said at the meeting.

1. UCP is comprised of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable cities (ICCAR), Megacities Alliance for Water and Climate, World Heritage Cities Programme, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience, the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Cities and UNESCO/Netexplo Observatory.



There's a woman...  
her husband is beating her up.

*Supported by UNESCO and its sister agencies UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, the film Listen to Her, depicting a chance telephone encounter between two women during lockdown in New Delhi, conveys a powerful message about gender roles and domestic violence.*

© Nandita Das / YouTube

## UNESCO supports Indian film on domestic violence during the COVID-19 crisis

In the midst of the pandemic, award-winning Indian film director and social advocate Nandita Das made a short film with a powerful message about gender roles and violence against women.

*Listen to Her* exposes what many women experienced during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The film, says the director, was a 'spontaneous response' to the cruel ironies of the lockdown slogan 'stay home, stay safe'. With the increase in their workload and the worldwide surge in domestic violence during the crisis, many women actually became more vulnerable inside their homes.

*Listen to Her* shows us a woman (Das herself) confined in her apartment with her family, doing her best to keep up with her office job online, housework and catering to the insistent demands of her husband and son. Suddenly she gets a telephone call – a wrong number – from a desperate woman who is trapped at home with her violent husband. 'Listen to me, sister,' pleads the caller, and the two women have a harrowing whispered conversation.

The film ends with the words 'Whisper. Speak. Shout. Your voice will be heard,' and the numbers of telephone helplines for women at risk.

Das explains, 'I wanted to tell a simple story of a woman overburdened and a woman abused, both, impacting each other. The film is adding its voice to encourage women to speak and for us to listen.' To encourage women to report abuse, Das also wanted to increase public awareness of designated helplines.

UNESCO has always believed women's voices must be heard, and gender equality is a top priority in all its activities. Das received the support of UNESCO and its sister UN agencies UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women to make and launch her film, which can be viewed on YouTube.

For UNESCO, all forms of discrimination based on gender are violations of human rights, as well as a barrier to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

# Jobs for young people to restore heritage in Yemen

Yemen's Old City of Sana'a, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has been inhabited continuously for 2,500 years. A centre for the spread of Islam in the 7th and 8th centuries, it is famous for its multistoried rammed-earth tower-houses and other remarkable vestiges of Yemen's ancient civilizations. Years of turmoil have caused a massive humanitarian crisis in Yemen and taken their toll on precious cultural heritage sites. For UNESCO, the deterioration of Yemeni culture undermines the identity and dignity of its people – and their ability to rebuild for the future. Poverty is widespread. Young people, who make up 70 per cent of the population, are particularly affected; 50 per cent of them are unemployed. Restoring hope and opportunity is vital to the country's recovery.

In partnership with the European Union, UNESCO launched, in 2018, the US\$12 million project 'Cash for Work: Promoting Livelihood Opportunities for Urban Youth in Yemen'. Implemented with the Social Fund for Development (SFD) and specialized local authorities, and focusing on the World Heritage cities of Sana'a, Shibam and Zabid and the city of Aden, this three-year project involves local young people in cash-based urban rehabilitation works on private houses, public spaces and commercial areas,

in order to secure adequate and dignified shelter for the inhabitants. Skilled and unskilled young workers under 35 are trained by local master builders. They are gaining skills and daily revenues to cover the essential needs of their families. Mohammed Al Zubairi, a homeowner whose house collapsed, said, 'I was very happy and emotional to see our home being saved. I brought my two young sons to the working site so they could witness it being brought back. This was important to me to heal the trauma they faced and bring hope back.' More than 40 historic buildings have already been rescued in Sana'a alone. So far 2,500 young people are enrolled with the objective of reaching 4,000, including at least 500 women, by August 2021.

In parallel, the project is supporting youth-led cultural programming and services. More than 200 artists and culture operators are engaged in cultural programming activities, including a significant number of young creators from the Yemeni diaspora. For Assim Abdelaziz, a Yemeni photographer from Aden, 'the most important cultural support Yemeni artists need is the spotlight and the empowerment of youth voices. There is a need to develop a new narrative to counter the very negative stories exacerbated by the war.'



*UNESCO representatives in the city of Sana'a. In partnership with the European Union, UNESCO's three-year project involves young Yemenis in cash-based urban rehabilitation works on private houses, public spaces and commercial spaces, as well as in youth-led cultural activities.*

© UNESCO / Mohammed Al-Jabri



*On 27 January 2020, the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi concentration camp.*

*© Shutterstock / Sandra Matic*

## UNESCO combats Holocaust denial, antisemitism and genocide

On 27 January 2020, the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau. To observe this important occasion, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay joined more than 200 Auschwitz and Holocaust survivors and dozens of Heads of State and Government at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in Oswiecim, Poland. Every year, UNESCO commemorates the International Day, established by the UN in 2005, with a ceremony and related events. The Day serves to pay tribute to the victims of the Holocaust, to recall its history and to promote UNESCO's related work on Holocaust and genocide education and prevention, including through the promotion of human rights and Global Citizenship Education.

In 2020, UNESCO organized a conference and ceremony at its Paris Headquarters and displayed two exhibitions presenting the Auschwitz-Birkenau site, the history of the Holocaust and related research. In her address, Director-General Audrey Azoulay stressed the role of education in combating antisemitism and racism, and quoted

Italian writer and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi: 'Many people – many nations – can find themselves believing, more or less consciously, that "every stranger is an enemy"... As long as the conception exists, the consequences remain to threaten us. The story of the death camps should be understood by everyone as a sinister signal of danger.'

Beyond Headquarters, UNESCO cooperated with The Holocaust and the UN Outreach Programme and brought the traveling exhibition 'Some Were Neighbors: Choice, Human Behavior & the Holocaust' to Field Offices and UN Information Centres (UNICs) in 24 countries. Developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the exhibition examines citizen and government collaboration and complicity with the Nazi regime in different European countries. Locally planned ceremonies and workshops accompanied the exhibition. In Nigeria alone, 1,500 students attended a workshop organized by the UNIC in Lagos. Students were presented with educational materials on the Holocaust and took part in awareness-building activities.



*The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia received the 2020 UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize, which rewards efforts to preserve and share documentary heritage as a common legacy for humanity.*

© Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum

The UNESCO Office in New Delhi held a screening of the documentary *Who Will Write Our History*, directed by Roberta Grossman, which tells the story of Emmanuel Ringelblum and other members of the clandestine group Oyneg Shabes ('The Joys of Shabbat') who risked their lives to document daily reality in the Warsaw ghetto. Their archive is now part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

The UNESCO Office in Mexico presented another documentary, *The Accountant of Auschwitz*, directed by Matthew Shoychet, about a 94-year-old former SS officer tried for complicity in mass murder. As in previous years, the UNESCO Office in Quito organized a candle-lighting ceremony with the Embassy of Israel and the Jewish community in Ecuador, including Holocaust survivors and their families.

For UNESCO, learning about the Holocaust and genocide is key to understanding the causes, dynamics and consequences of atrocity crimes and to strengthen the resilience of learners against all forms of discrimination. Based on this understanding, UNESCO provides technical guidance and training to Member States and education stakeholders worldwide, strengthening capacities to deal with violent pasts through education and genocide prevention.

In this context UNESCO supports the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh in helping Cambodia come to terms with the unspeakable violence in its recent history. From 1975 to 1979, Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime caused the deaths of an estimated 2 million people – 25 per cent of the Cambodian population – from starvation, overwork and executions. The museum is housed in the former Khmer Rouge S-21 detention centre, where more than 18,000 prisoners were interrogated, tortured and murdered.

UNESCO is supporting the preservation and digitization of the centre's 400,000 pages of archives, which are inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. This will result in more than 4 million sets of data, which will be made available to the public on a website to be launched before the end of 2020. This is the most comprehensive documentary collection on the Democratic Kampuchea prison system: it includes prisoners' biographies, photographs and confessions, and Khmer Rouges' notebooks and issues of their Revolutionary Flag magazine. The project is funded by KOICA, the Korea International Cooperation Agency.

In 2020, UNESCO further undertook a major upgrade of the museum's facilities to expand its educational outreach. In addition, the Museum received the UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize 2020, which rewards efforts to preserve documentary heritage and make it accessible as a common legacy for humanity.



Cover photo:

***War destroyed Hanan's school in Taiz, Yemen, but she is determined to continue studying. With the additional setback of COVID-19, the most vulnerable populations face the greatest risk, and particularly girls: over 11 million may not have returned to school at all in 2020. This threatens decades of progress made towards gender equality, and puts girls at a higher risk of early pregnancy, forced marriage and violence. UNESCO's ambitious Global Education Coalition seeks to unlock coordinated and inclusive solutions to support teachers. On the ground, UNESCO also implements several projects to restore hope and opportunity for young people in Yemen.***

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*On 10 March 2020, UNESCO celebrated the 40th anniversary of the completion of its International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, Egypt. The 20-year campaign, a landmark in world heritage protection, was launched in 1960 to dismantle and relocate six groups of monuments in Nubia, including the Great Temple of Abu Simbel, submerged by the Aswan High Dam's artificial lake.*

**Since wars begin in  
the minds of women and men,  
it is in the minds of women  
and men that the defences  
of peace must be constructed.**



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