



Communication and Information Programme



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“At a time of profound transformation, inequality and upheaval, UNESCO has redoubled its efforts to ensure freedom of expression, access to information and inclusive digital development worldwide. However, much more remains to be done. We call on all Member States and partners to join us and support our action to make sure communication and information can be maintained as a common good and a cornerstone of healthy, democratic societies.”

Audrey Azoulay, Director-General,
UNESCO

UNESCO's work and vision

UNESCO is the UN specialized agency building peace in the minds of people through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. Our mission is to foster intercultural dialogue and sustainable development, by promoting the free flow of ideas.

By adopting a multi-disciplinary and inclusive approach, UNESCO works with both duty-bearers and rights-holders across the world to develop and implement targeted actions that are born out of local needs, which ensures a holistic and results-based approach for sustainable change.

In the field of communication and information, UNESCO defends and promotes freedom of expression, media independence and pluralism, and the building of inclusive knowledge societies underpinned by universal access to information and the innovative use of digital technologies.

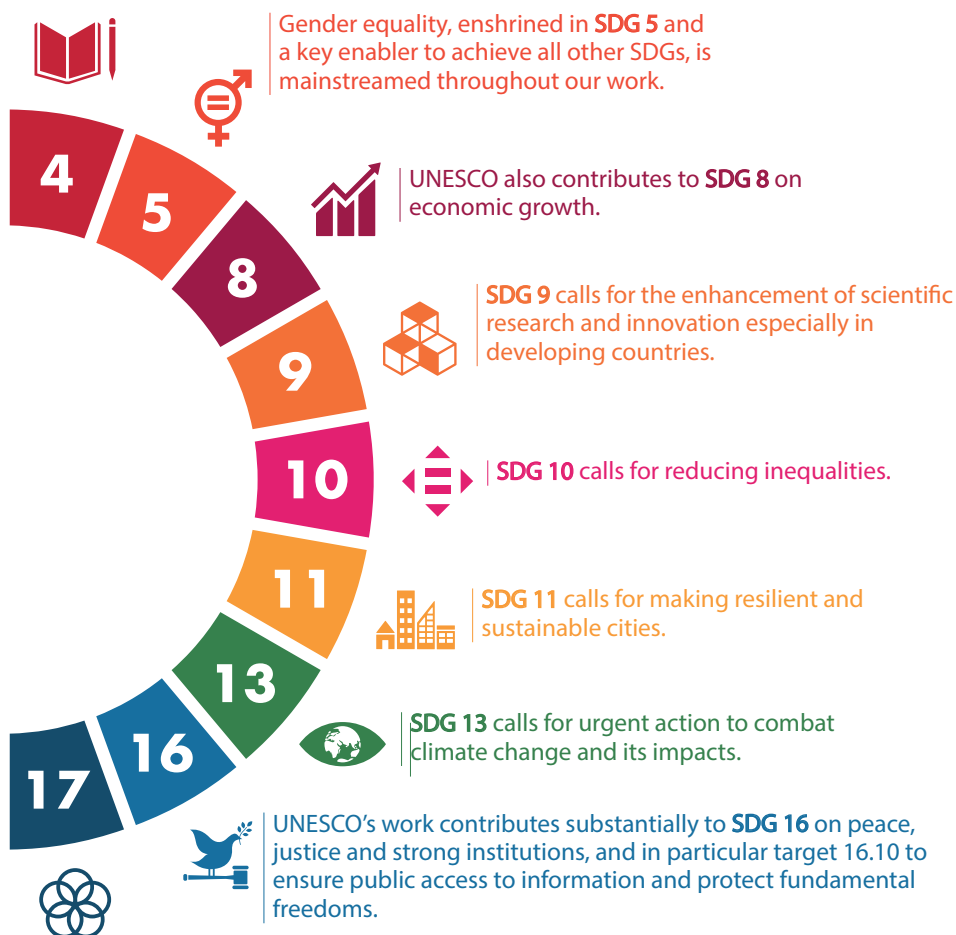
Through capacity-building, policy advice, international cooperation, monitoring and foresight in the fields of freedom of expression, access to information, and digital transformation, UNESCO will continue to empower key actors with a view to ensuring that fundamental freedoms are guaranteed online and offline, in line with international standards.

This is all the more relevant to ensure the ethical development and use of emerging technologies, which have a growing impact on all aspects of the world's societies. Citizens will also be empowered to enjoy these fundamental freedoms through the development of 21st century skills and the fostering of enabling environments for media pluralism and diversity.

UNESCO and the 2030 Agenda

Through its unique and transversal mandate in the area of communication and information, UNESCO contributes to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, thereby supporting the international community in its efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

UNESCO contributes to **SDG 4**, on quality education for all.



SDG 17 calls for partnerships for the Goals.

Global Priority Gender Equality

Gender equality is an essential component of UNESCO's work and vision. For UNESCO, gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.

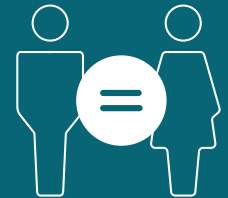
It implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups among women and men.

Achieving gender equality means overcoming systemic, skewed power dynamics and societal vulnerabilities. It requires the reimagining and remaking of structures and systems. By recognizing the challenges at hand and taking a transversal, thematic approach across its mandate, UNESCO and its partners aims to contribute to a dynamic global agenda to advance human rights and gender equality in all its fields of competence.

UNESCO's work in the area of communication and information lays a particular emphasis on overcoming gender imbalances. This include promoting gender equality in media policies, practice and content, and enhancing the safety of women journalists online and offline; building capacities and knowledge of women and girls in digital technologies; and reinforcing gender inclusive access to information and knowledge, including through documentary heritage.

Read more: [UNESCO's Priority Gender Equality Action Plan 2014-2021](#)

Gender equality is a human rights principle, and a precondition for sustainable, people-centered development, as well as a goal in and of itself.



Global Priority Africa

Africa is a longstanding priority for UNESCO. It is the youngest continent in the world in terms of youth population - home to a fifth of the world's young people and around 75% of the population are under 35.

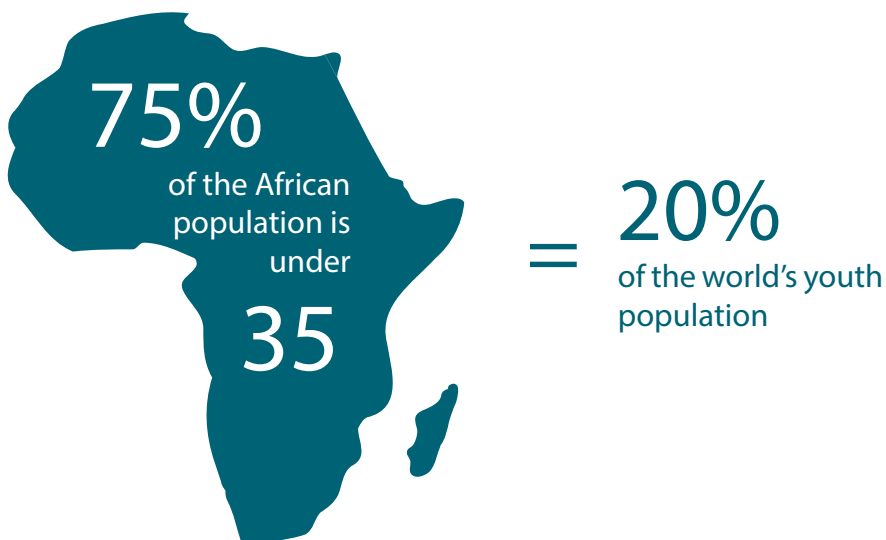
As such, a focus on Africa is integrated throughout the Organization's programmes. By adopting a transversal approach, with a particular focus on youth and gender equality, UNESCO aims to contribute to the achievement of the African Union's Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want, and its vision of:

“[a]n integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”.

Through targeted actions and by mainstreaming Africa as a priority, UNESCO addresses major challenges related to demographic growth, social transformation, democratic governance, and sustainable development and economic growth.

Through its projects and activities in the field of communication and information, UNESCO supports three key lines of action in support of Global Priority Africa: contributing to a culture of peace and non-violence; promoting an environment conducive to freedom of expression and media development; and harnessing the power of innovation and technology, including Artificial Intelligence, to promote sustainable and inclusive development.

Read more: [UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2014-2021](#)



Supporting freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists



| Key challenges

The crucial work of journalists in providing reliable information to citizens is undermined by increasing restrictions on freedom of expression and by persistent online and physical attacks. Women journalists are particularly subject to harassment and threats, especially online.

Crimes committed against journalists go largely unpunished: more than 950 killings of journalists were recorded by UNESCO in the last ten years and 90% of these cases remain unsolved.

At the same time, the use of digital technologies for content personalization and moderation can impact freedom of expression and facilitate the spread of misinformation and disinformation. Misleading or false information undermines societal trust and imperils access to reliable and verified information. This, in turn, risks distorting citizens' understanding of critically important issues as well as disrupting democratic processes, such as elections.

The increased use of digital platforms in the absence of inclusive, global Internet governance frameworks has also led to the spread of hate speech, which fuels online and offline discrimination, hostility and violence.

Addressing these challenges calls for the protection and promotion of information as a common good that is available to all and that contributes to the achievement of peace and sustainable development.



With your support, UNESCO will...

- Advocate for freedom of expression worldwide through targeted actions, by leveraging partnerships and networks at the international, regional and local levels.
- Lead the global commemorations of the World Press Freedom Day (WPDF), the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) and the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI).
- Lead the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and monitor and report on crimes against journalists, including through the UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists.
- Raise awareness on the specific threats faced by women journalists and build capacities to improve their safety.
- Promote international standards and norms in media reforms and regulations.
- Research and report on the state of freedom of expression and the safety of journalists in the world including through the UNESCO World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development report and the UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity.
- Strengthen capacities of the judiciary and security forces to protect freedom of expression, access to information and other fundamental rights both online and offline, through the Judges Initiative.
- Advocate for increased transparency and accountability of online platforms and address related challenges, such as false information and hate speech online.
- Strengthen capacities of electoral authorities to deal with misinformation and disinformation during elections and democratic processes.

"Journalists are essential in preserving the fundamental right to freedom of expression. When [they] are attacked with impunity, there is a breakdown in security and judicial systems for all." — Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO

Recent achievements

- Four laureates of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize were released from prison after receiving the award. The 2021 laureate of the Prize was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize the same year.
- UNESCO has trained more than 23,000 judicial actors from over 150 countries and 8,500 law enforcement agents on freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists.
- Since 2018, UNESCO has contributed to media policy reform in more than 15 countries to align with international standards and be gender-sensitive, through UNESCO's Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP).
- The Global Media Defence Fund administered by UNESCO has supported civil society organizations to strengthen media freedom and journalists' legal protection in over 50 countries since 2020. UNESCO has received 140 proposals from candidates all around the globe following the 2021 Call for proposals.
- In 2020, UNESCO launched a global research project on how to address online violence against women journalists with respondents from 125 countries, indicating that almost 75% had experienced online violence. The discussion paper presenting the research "The Chilling: Global Trends in online violence against women journalists" was echoed worldwide.
- UNESCO celebrates annually World Press Freedom Day which advances policy debate and international commitment to media freedom. The Windhoek+30 Declaration was adopted in 2021, and affirmed information as a public good, calling for media viability, media and information literacy and the transparency of Internet platforms. The transparency of Internet platforms was also presented in an issue brief "Letting the Sun Shine In: Transparency and Accountability in the Digital Age".
- In 2021, the African Digital Platform on the Safety of Journalists in Africa was launched by African media stakeholders and regional intergovernmental organizations to monitor crimes against media workers on the continent.



23,000 +

judicial actors



8,500 +

law enforcement
agents

Trained on freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists.

Partner with UNESCO

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More information: [Fostering Freedom of Expression](#), [UNESCO's Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists](#)

Empowering societies, citizens and youth through media and information literacy



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| Key challenges

The rise of digital technologies is having a profound impact on the ways in which information is produced, shared and used. Citizens, and youth in particular, are more connected today than ever, but many lack awareness of the mechanisms that frame their digital presence and engagement with information online and offline.

Whilst online services offer new forms of participation, the digital transformation has also been accompanied by a surge in online hate speech, misinformation and disinformation.

Content personalization and moderation further drive this dangerous trend, with serious repercussions for freedom of expression and democratic development.

In addition, gender-based inequalities and socio-economic disparities underpin the increasing divide in digital access and skills. In a world where new technologies are powerful levers for human development, more needs to be done to enable all countries to harness the potential of the digital transformation, bridge the digital gaps, and ensure citizens' informed participation in democratic processes.

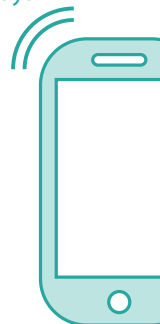
By empowering citizens and youth with digital, media and information skills, UNESCO contributes to building media and information literate societies.

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| With your support, UNESCO will...

- Develop global standards on media and information literacy, and support their implementation in educational curricula, public and private sector policies, media and youth organizations, while also addressing emerging themes such as artificial intelligence.
- Strengthen networks and research on media and information literacy to promote global citizenship education including through the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Alliance, and the University Network for Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID), and expand the UNESCO MIL CLICKS social media peer-to-peer learning initiative.
- Lead the annual celebration of Global Media and Information Literacy Week and organize international youth fora to promote knowledge exchange and self-empowerment through digital literacy.
- Bridge the digital divide and the digital gender divide through UNESCO's YouthMobile Initiative which develops coding and programming skills among youth, to find local solutions for sustainable development issues through the development of mobile applications.
- Empower girls and women ICT teachers through targeted YouthMobile workshops to improve their digital skills and help them become leaders in technology and innovation.

UNESCO's YouthMobile Initiative leverages computer science education and the widespread availability of mobile phones to empower its students. Young girls and boys are introduced to coding, and are encouraged to develop, promote and scale up mobile applications to contribute to solving sustainable development challenges.



| Recent achievements

- UNESCO raised worldwide awareness on media and information literacy through the annual Global Media and Information Literacy Week and global social media campaigns. From 2016 to 2020, some 115 countries increased awareness on media and information literacy and over 750 events celebrated the Week.
- The social media and peer education initiative MIL CLICKS launched in 2017 helps people acquire media and information literacy skills. MIL CLICKS has already engaged more than 20,000 youth in the framework of the Social Media 4 Peace project aiming at building capacities to counter harmful content online.
- Stakeholders in close to 100 countries have been trained on the newly launched Second Edition of the UNESCO Model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Educators and Learners entitled "Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely".
- UNESCO supported over 128 training institutions and 300 secondary schools worldwide to pilot the previous edition of the Media and Information Literacy Curriculum, and engaged with 300 youth organizations, including 100 in Africa, to integrate media and information literacy in their policies and operations reaching hundreds of thousands of people.
- Through the YouthMobile Initiative, UNESCO empowered young girls and boys with digital and coding skills in over 40 countries. YouthMobile supported large-impact initiatives such as the Africa Code Week organized by SAP, the continent's largest annual coding event, initiating more than 10 million youth to computer coding in more than 40 countries between 2018 and 2020, of which 46% were girls or young women.
- UNESCO supported at least 25 countries towards developing national media and information literacy policies and strategies.

20,000 +

young people have engaged in the peer education project

MIL CLICKS

to acquire media and information literacy skills.



Partner with UNESCO

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More information: [Media and Information Literacy](#), [MIL CLICKS Social Media Initiative](#), [UNESCO's YouthMobile Initiative](#)

Supporting the development of a free, diverse and gender-inclusive independent media



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| Key challenges

Free, pluralistic and quality independent journalism is a central pillar of democracy as it provides citizens with information enabling them to actively participate in democratic life. The COVID-19 pandemic has further demonstrated the crucial role of media and journalists to provide reliable information in times of crisis, and especially to remote or vulnerable communities. Yet, today's media face unprecedented challenges.

- Digitization is disrupting business models and increasing the dependence of traditional media companies on public and private support. This threatens media independence and risks undermining public trust in the media sector.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed both the gap in the media's capacity to counter disinformation and the precarious and unsafe working conditions for many media personnel worldwide.
- Gender equality in media is stagnating and even regressing in many countries.

Women occupy only 27% of top media management jobs, and constitute less than 25% of persons seen, heard or read about in media.

| With your support, UNESCO will...

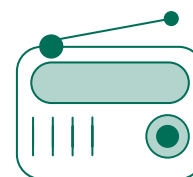
- Support policies and law reforms to foster media pluralism and independence, to uphold the vision of information as a public good.
- Support media development using UNESCO policy assessment frameworks, such as the Journalists' Safety Indicators (JSI) and the Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM).
- Strengthen media viability and support media to develop sustainable financial models, and foster diversity in management and content.
- Provide financial and technical support to grass-root media development projects that foster media diversity and independence, through the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).
- Promote radio as an important component of media pluralism, by leading the global commemoration of World Radio Day (13 February) and supporting community radios.
- Advance gender equality in and through the media by strengthening media management policies and practice, and by promoting gender-responsive representation and coverage in media content.
- Build the media's capacities to ensure professional and ethical coverage of emergency and crisis situations and of key issues such as climate change, migration and terrorism.
- Improve journalism education by developing state-of-the-art learning material and curricula in collaboration with leading journalism schools and promoting the Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education.



The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) has promoted the development of free and independent media for the last 40 years by supporting media projects in developing countries.

| Recent achievements

- The IPDC supported 147 new media development projects in close to 80 countries, for a total amount of USD 4.1 million, between 2018 and 2019.
- Thousands of public, private and community radio stations were mobilized to prevent the spread of COVID-19, by broadcasting awareness-raising messages in more than 40 languages on healthy behaviours and to debunk rumours about the virus.
- UNESCO supported more than 30 media organizations to strengthen editorial policies on youth and gender equality in the media and provided training to enhance gender equality in the media to more than 90 media institutions.
- The 2021 World Radio Day (WRD) was observed through over 600 events in 128 countries and highlighted the evolution and connecting role of radio.
- UNESCO developed guidelines on how to work with the media to prevent gender-based violence in collaboration with UN Women, and a handbook for media professionals on reporting on violence against women and girls.
- The handbook 'Journalism, "Fake News" and Disinformation' (2018) has been translated into more than 40 languages providing guidance to journalists and media professionals worldwide on countering misinformation and disinformation.



2021 World Radio Day was observed through hundreds of events in 128 countries.

Partner with UNESCO

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More information: [Media Development and the IPDC](#), [Media Pluralism and Diversity](#), [UNESCO's Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists](#)

Promoting open access to information for all and supporting linguistic diversity



| Key challenges

Access to reliable information is crucial for citizens to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities, and to hold their governments to account. While technological advances have improved access to information and knowledge, they have also introduced new forms of exclusion and inequalities.

Beyond the digital divide, language barriers continue to hinder the right to information of indigenous and minority language users.

While a mere 5% of the languages of the world are present on the Internet, around 40% of the 7,000 languages used worldwide are today at risk of disappearing. Indigenous languages, in particular, are disappearing at an alarming rate around the world, jeopardizing unique knowledge systems and cultures as a whole.

Other marginalized populations such as persons with disabilities and women and girls also continue to face obstacles in accessing information, which risk compounding the inequalities they already face.

The restrictions on accessing offline information due to the closure of educational establishments and libraries, and to online information due to the digital divide, has exacerbated the information accessibility challenges faced by marginalized groups.

Effectively addressing these challenges requires inclusive and open modes of data, and information as well as knowledge democratization supported by adapted policy frameworks and an innovative use of digital technologies.



| With your support, UNESCO will...

- Protect and promote the right to access information as a fundamental freedom and key pillar for building inclusive knowledge societies.
- Monitor and report on access to information, as custodian agency for SDG indicator 16.10.2 on public access to information, and assist countries in tracking progress on this global goal.
- Strengthen and scale up actions of the Information for All Programme (IFAP), to develop national information policies and knowledge strategies through ICTs.
- Foster multilingualism and linguistic diversity through the UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace*, and the UNESCO World Atlas of Languages, as well as by co-leading the implementation of the 2022-2032 International Decade of Indigenous Languages together with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- Highlight inclusive solutions for the empowerment of persons with disabilities, through awarding the UNESCO/Emir Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- Advocate for open access to scientific information, open data and universal access to research in order to bridge scientific gaps and foster South-South cooperation in that area.

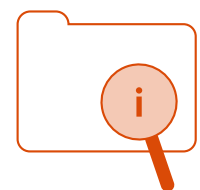
UNESCO fosters multilingualism and linguistic diversity through its *Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace*.



| Recent achievements

- UNESCO positioned indigenous languages on the global agenda through the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, with more than 900 events held worldwide and is leading the international and multi-stakeholder preparations for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032).
- The UNESCO World Atlas of Languages was developed, a dynamic and data powered platform which contains extensive information on more than 8,000 languages worldwide, and that fosters knowledge sharing on the diversity of languages in the world.
- The monitoring and reporting capacities of Member States on public access to information has been improved with 102 countries participating in the 2021 reporting exercise for SDG 16.10.2, a 48% increase compared to 2020, with support from UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).
- UNESCO leads the global commemoration of the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAL). The 2021 edition raised awareness on the role of access to information laws and their implementation with the theme "Building Back Better with Access to Information".
- UNESCO supported 24 Member States in the development of access to information legislation, in line with international standards.

The Information for All Programme (IFAP) was established in 2001 as a platform for international policy discussions in the area of access to information and knowledge.



Partner with UNESCO

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More information: UNESCO and Universal Access to Information, Information for All Programme (IFAP), UNESCO/Emir Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

Foster innovation and an inclusive digital transformation in the service of sustainable development



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| Key challenges

Digital technologies and innovation are increasingly critical to the advancement of human development and the creation of inclusive knowledge societies. New technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain technology and the Internet of Things hold huge promise for society.

However, this technological promise is increasingly being counterbalanced by a set of ethical and accessibility challenges that threaten to interfere with or even obstruct fundamental human rights.

Issues such as increased surveillance, data mining and profiling, as well as algorithmic bias and automated decision-making, represent new risks to the rights to privacy and non-discrimination. In addition, divides in terms of digital skills and accessibility, both within and between countries, are reinforcing existing social, economic and gender inequalities.

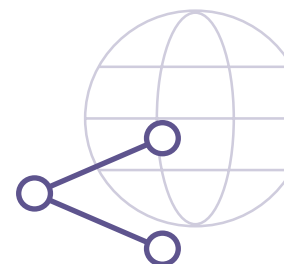
UNESCO is addressing these challenges by promoting a truly multi-stakeholder approach to technological development that is aligned with the principles of respect for human rights, openness and accessibility.



| With your support, UNESCO will...

- Reduce the digital and knowledge divides and foster an inclusive digital transformation that respects and protects human rights through capacity-building, policy advice and awareness-raising.
- Monitor and address potential risks of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and develop rights-based standards and frameworks to help ensure a human-centered approach to their application.
- Build capacities to implement global standards and prevent discrimination - including the proliferation of gender biases - through technology.
- Support national assessments of Internet development based on the principles of human rights, openness, accessibility, and multi-stakeholder participation (ROAM), using UNESCO's Internet Universality Indicators framework.
- Advance digital skills and competencies among youth and with particular attention to gender equality, through micro-learning online courses and other innovative tools. A comic book will be published to engage youth in the development of AI.
- Promote inclusive and human-centered AI in Africa through open data, strengthened regional networks and customized tools.
- Support the implementation of the UNESCO *Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER)*, to harness the transformational potential of OER for lifelong learning, democratization of knowledge and innovation.
- Innovate teacher education through digital technologies, and expand the use of the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT) to strengthen learning in the digital age.

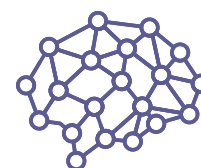
While around 51% of the global population uses the Internet, an estimated 3.7 billion do not have Internet access. In least developed countries, only 19% of the population uses the Internet.



| Recent achievements

- UNESCO developed global partnerships and projects on AI such as the recent launch of the [GlobalPolicy.ai](#) platform in 2021 in partnership with other international organizations, allowing citizens and stakeholders to access up-to-date information on AI policy initiatives around the world.
- UNESCO has stimulated policy dialogue on AI issues including through a series of global dialogues in 2021 on AI and the Planet in partnership with UNEP to engage public and private stakeholders on challenges of AI and climate change.
- A regional survey in Africa mobilized 32 countries and enabled to assess AI-related needs and requirements for capacity-building in the continent. A report presenting the responses was released in 2021 by UNESCO and new initiatives are being developed to follow-up on priorities identified across the continent.
- The launch of the OER Dynamic Coalition in 2020 promoted the creation and use of open license material for learning, teaching and research and counts over 40 countries.
- 33 countries have used and/or are using UNESCO's Internet Universality Indicators to assess their national Internet environment to help improve related policies, and a Dynamic Coalition of Internet Universality was launched in 2020 to engage countries to promote free, open and accessible Internet for all and provide a space for multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration.
- UNESCO is developing resources such as a massive open online course (MOOC) to build the judiciary's capacities on AI and the rule of law as well as a publication on blind spots in AI policy and programme development in cooperation with Mila - the Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute.

In response to COVID-19, UNESCO launched the #DontGoViral campaign, aimed at informing communities and addressing the spread of false information around the virus. The campaign, which mobilized renowned African artists, received more than 580 submissions from 54 African countries, and generated some 220 million hits on social media.



Partner with UNESCO

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More information: [Building Knowledge Societies](#), [UNESCO and Artificial Intelligence](#), [UNESCO and Internet Governance](#)

Protecting, preserving and promoting access to the world's documentary heritage



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| Key challenges

Documentary heritage – from preserving documents in libraries, archives and museums to the software that is driving the digital transformation – is an essential part of humanity's collective memory. It is a key resource that helps us learn from the past; whether it be contributing to building more equitable, inclusive and sustainable societies or helping us tackle current crises with information on past responses.

Many original and unaltered items and collections are today endangered because of looting and dispersal, illegal trading, deliberate destruction, inadequate storage and a lack of funding.

Moreover, these risks are heightened during times of crisis such as conflicts and natural disasters.

New strategies are thus needed to support and update documentary heritage preservation tools and techniques, and digital preservation should be included as a component in disaster risk reduction strategies. This should also include strengthening the capacities of memory and research institutions to improve their resilience in the face of emergency and crisis situations.



| With your support, UNESCO will...

- Promote the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage for sustainable development and peace, including through the Memory of the World Programme.
- Strengthen local, regional and international networks and partnerships for the identification, preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage and upstream policy advocacy for sustainable preservation of documentary heritage.
- Build capacities of policy makers and memory institutions to implement UNESCO's *Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage, including in Digital Form*.
- Foster resilience and emergency preparedness of memory institutions, especially in Africa and Small Island Developing States, by supporting disaster risk reduction strategies and the protection of documentary heritage in conflict zones.
- Promote digital preservation of documentary heritage through initiatives such as PERSIST, a project under the Memory of the World Programme focusing on the digitization for long-term preservation and access to digital documentary heritage.
- Promote the important role of women and marginalized groups in documentary heritage processes and projects and through research and monitoring initiatives.

| Recent achievements

- UNESCO has raised awareness of the significance of documentary heritage, including through inscriptions on the Memory of the World Register.
- UNESCO has built the capacities of archives, museums and libraries to effectively respond to crises and supported memory institutions in the digitization of documentary heritage items.
- The second Global Policy Forum on Preservation of Documentary Heritage for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in 2021 raised awareness and fostered exchange among experts and policy-makers on the issues of disaster risk reduction as an enabler of sustainable preservation of documentary heritage.
- An international consultation organized by UNESCO in 2020 in Mali on the safeguarding, accessibility and promotion of ancient manuscripts in the Sahel, led to the production of national policy recommendations on the issue.
- The development of the online Software Heritage archive was supported by UNESCO, enabling a full access to the source code of more than 166 million software projects.
- The project "Women in History – Telling HERstory through Memory of the World" identifies and highlights gender-related stories or documentary heritage that portrays significant achievements by women throughout history.
- An e-course for teachers integrates the Memory of the World International Register in their teaching. This free resource provides practical tools and sample lesson plans to help teachers foster intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and create engaging experiences for students.

UNESCO established the Memory of the World Programme in 1992, in view of the parlous state of preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage in various parts of the world. War and social upheaval, as well as severe lack of resources, have worsened problems which have existed for centuries. The Memory of the World Programme aims to ensure that the world's documentary heritage is fully preserved and protected, and accessible to all without hindrance.



Since 2005, the UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize has been awarded to individuals and institutions in recognition of their significant contributions to the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage.



Partner with UNESCO

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More information: [Memory of the World Programme](#), [UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize](#), [PERSIST project](#), [Software Heritage](#)



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Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic: Addressing disinformation and ensuring access to reliable information for all in times of crisis

| Key challenges

Communication and information play a vital role in responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic and its effects, as well as in building the resilience of societies to future crises.

The global health crisis has revealed the extent to which the digital transformation impacts all facets of society, in particular as technologies have been used to ensure continuation of activities online, across the world. This has contributed to the spread of an “infodemic” swirling around the pandemic, and misinformation and disinformation have fomented increasing polarization, the spread of conspiracy theories, and hate speech online.

Distorted or false information also threatens transparency and accountability, which are basic principles in democratic and inclusive societies.

In this context, the role of journalists is more important than ever, as providers of reliable and verified information. However, the effects of the pandemic have hindered, and at times threatened journalists’ daily work from providing accurate and accessible information. The menace to media viability threatens to expose the media to instrumentalization in the service of vested and political interests. Parts of the world – vulnerable communities, minorities, women and young girls in particular – have been excluded from access to information and knowledge when educational institutions and museums closed down.

The pandemic has also made digital and knowledge divides more visible within and among countries. Digital technologies and skills which are key to building inclusive knowledge societies have not reached marginalized groups, depriving least developed countries from generating innovative solutions in the face of the pandemic.

In the field of communication and information, UNESCO addressed the COVID-19 pandemic by:

Building capacities and developing knowledge tools for the media and journalists

- UNESCO developed and promoted resources to build the capacities of the media to address the “disinfodemic”. This included the organization of two Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) in cooperation with the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas (University of Texas) to build capacities for journalists to cover the COVID-19 pandemic and to cover vaccine-related issues. Over 9,000 journalists from around the world took the courses.
- Through support from the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), UNESCO facilitated capacity building of media professionals including women journalists, and community media in developing countries, to help them cover the pandemic while promoting the importance of free and independent press.

The Resource Center for Responses to COVID-19 gathers useful resources aiming at debunking misinformation, facilitating access to information, and promoting the use of ICTs to counter emerging challenges in the wake of the pandemic.

Tackling the spread of disinformation and the surge of hate speech

- UNESCO produced and disseminated media and information literacy visuals, graphics and social media messages to address disinformation and fight discrimination. Around 50 webinars on media and information literacy and the pandemic were organized. In addition, UNESCO in collaboration with the WHO developed [free of access audio files](#) in more than 10 languages supporting radio networks to disseminate reliable information on the pandemic.
- UNESCO launched the #DontGoViral campaign to counter the spread of misinformation and disinformation in Africa, in collaboration with the Innovation for Policy Foundation. The campaign crowdsourced openly licensed local content providing reliable information about COVID-19 to communities across Africa. It received more than 580 submissions from 54 African countries, generating some 220 million hits on social media.



Harnessing AI and digital technologies for innovative solutions to pandemic-related challenges

- UNESCO organized the global hackathon “[CodeTheCurve](#)” in partnership with IBM and SAP, engaging 165 young developers and innovators to develop youth-led solutions to emerging challenges in the post-COVID world.
- Through UNESCO’s Information for All Programme (IFAP), the “Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative” was launched to build capacities and enable knowledge sharing on AI in the SIDS of the Caribbean, in the context of the pandemic.

Addressing disinformation across the world

UNESCO and the EU launched the global [#CoronavirusFacts](#) campaign to help the media share verified information and raise awareness among citizens on how to identify disinformation on the COVID-19 pandemic online in four subregions of the world, including six countries in Africa of three subregions.

Promoting open and universal access to information in response to COVID-19

- To ensure continuity of online teaching and learning, UNESCO made available openly licensed material through its [online Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Hub](#) and promoted Open access to scientific information to facilitate knowledge sharing.
- The 2020 International Day for Universal Access to Information highlighted the importance of access to information in times of crisis. An [issue brief](#) was published on the Right to Information in Times of Crisis under the series “World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development”.
- UNESCO and its partners [made a call](#) to harness the potential of documentary heritage in building inclusive and resilient societies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with the Memory of the World Programme.



How to partner with UNESCO

UNESCO's approach to partnership is firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and at its heart lies Sustainable Development Goal 17, which aims to revitalize global collaboration for the goals. UNESCO's programmes are customized to meet the needs of its Member States and align with global, regional and national development frameworks. In this way, UNESCO can assure its partners that when engaging with UNESCO, they become part of a wider effort that is anchored in human values and rights, and global goals for sustainable development.

UNESCO's engagement with donors is always framed within a commitment to transparency, impact, mutual accountability and the pursuit of long-term sustainable partnership.

- **Financial support to UNESCO programmes**

Financial support to UNESCO is often accompanied by knowledge sharing and networking opportunities, since cooperation focuses on areas that constitute common strategic priorities for UNESCO and its partners. Some partners also support fundraising to UNESCO through joint activities and outreach within their own networks and constituencies.

Pooled funding mechanisms:

- Special Account of the Multi-Donor Programme for Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP)
- Special Account of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)
- Special Account of the Information for All Programme (IFAP)
- The Global Media Defense Fund (GMDF)
- The Special Account for the Communication and Information Programme

Single donations/specific single donor project or activity:

- Funds-in-Trust (FIT)
- Regular budget contribution



- **Advocacy, knowledge sharing and innovation**

Many partners work with UNESCO on outreach and advocacy to change mindsets, influence behaviours and raise awareness. Other partnerships focus on promoting learning, sharing experiences and good practices, and capacity development. Innovation and co-design of new solutions to emerging challenges also characterize many of UNESCO's partnerships.

- **Programme delivery**

Not-for-profit organizations can act as specialized implementation partners in UNESCO programmes. Such partners bring their unique added value to the programme. While they also contribute to the project in cash or in kind, the main appeal of this unique modality lies in it allowing such partners to be involved from the design phase through to evaluation of the project.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks**

UNESCO increasingly engages with partners through new forms of strategic multi-stakeholder partnerships and coalitions, bringing together governments, international organizations, NGOs and civil society leaders and the private sector, to realize common goals.

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

Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO



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