

Joint Research Report on National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia

Past, Present and Future Priorities of
National Commissions for UNESCO
in East and Southeast Asia

10 participating National Commissions for UNESCO:



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10 participating National Commissions for UNESCO:





Mongolia

Viet Nam

Laos

Thailand

Myanmar

Cambodia



Republic of Korea

The Philippines

Indonesia

Timor-Leste

FOREWORD



The COVID-19 pandemic has brought today's globalized world unprecedented challenges. UNESCO and the national commissions of its member states are doing all they can to meet these challenges, taking their activities online, to ensure that international exchanges and dialogue, and the **rest of UNESCO's important work, all continue. Against this** backdrop, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, together with the national commissions for UNESCO of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam, have come together to work on a joint research project for National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia, aiming to build on existing cooperation to find further common ground and forge new partnerships.

Despite the current difficulties of closed borders and reductions in activities by national commissions during the pandemic, the ten national commissions involved in the project have been relentless in pushing ahead with international cooperation, and I am very pleased to co-publish the outcome of these efforts : the Joint Research Report on National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia.

The East and Southeast Asia region is immensely diverse, with many and varied languages, cultures, climates and political systems. The UNESCO member states in the region each had different reasons for joining the Organization, and their national commissions are of varying sizes, with different structures and budgets, and differences in their key activities and priorities. The joint research project was launched as an active effort to seek common ground within this diversity, and to strengthen the solidarity and cooperation among national commissions in East Asia and Southeast Asia.

By looking at each national commission's past, present, and future priorities, the

project aims to clarify the identity of each participant and to identify what is essentially shared among us. To this end, each national report explores the common challenges for the future of East and Southeast Asia, and proposes ideas on joint projects to respond to those challenges.

International cooperation among national commissions for UNESCO has become harder during the COVID-19 pandemic, so the implementation of this joint research project in a non-face-to-face manner has been a meaningful learning opportunity for national commissions in East and Southeast Asia in working **under the conditions of the 'new normal' in the COVID-19 era.**

I hope this project will serve as a building block for the further flourishing of UNESCO activities in East and Southeast Asia, especially among national commissions, and increased regional agenda-setting. I also hope it will give UNESCO family members all over the world a better understanding of national commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the officials and researchers of each national commission for their active engagement in the project and for their careful and valuable work in putting together an overarching picture of the past, present and future of each national commission.

Kwangho Kim
Secretary-General
Korean National Commission for UNESCO



The National Commissions for UNESCO play an increasingly important facilitative role in the Asia-Pacific region. Given the diversity and complexity of developmental challenges we face, UNESCO relies on its closest partners at national level to advance its mission and mandate in education, the sciences, culture and communication to forge a culture of peace. There has never been a more important time for collaboration in order to achieve our shared aspirations in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This important report by ten National Commissions for UNESCO underlines the important choices we have to make. The UN system has called this the Decade of Action. Indeed – nothing less will do. The impacts of COVID-19 have laid bare the vulnerabilities of our planet, people and shared prosperity. Through partnership and building a culture of shared responsibility, UNESCO is working to build a more just, inclusive and peaceful world that fosters sustainable development.

On behalf of UNESCO Bangkok, I am pleased to support the vision and hard work of our National Commissions – building peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue to promote a spirit of solidarity and shared humanity. We welcome this report and look forward to joining in this critically important work to strengthen collaboration across Asia and the Pacific.

Shigeru Aoyagi
Director, UNESCO Bangkok



This year we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, and five years since embarking upon the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our collective blueprint for better future for humanity. These important milestones are being marked at the unsettling time when a virus is ravaging the world. But there is one important lesson to draw from the COVID-19 pandemic: that the wellbeing of our own societies is intertwined with the wellbeing of other peoples and nations. More than ever, we see that cooperation simply makes sense: faced with collective challenges, we must become more and better interconnected in the solutions we seek.

The National Commissions for UNESCO (or NatComs, for short) are a key part of the architecture of the Organization, established to facilitate cooperation with and between UNESCO Member States. Acting as agencies of consultation, liaison and information, and mobilizing and coordinating partnerships with national stakeholders, NatComs make valuable contributions to advancing UNESCO's objectives, implementing its programmes, and promoting UNESCO's visibility. I'm immensely grateful to the five NatComs in the UNESCO Beijing Cluster for their support to our work towards peace and development with a human face, while protecting the environment and promoting prosperity in East Asia.

I applaud the leadership of the *Korean National Commission for UNESCO*, which has brought together ten NatComs in Asia, seeking to identify common challenges and foster cooperation for shared solutions. I salute all NatComs participating in this worthy initiative, for their commitment towards unlocking socioeconomic recovery from pandemic impacts and progress towards SDG achievement. The time is now to scale up our collaboration, and I look forward to working with our NatComs on resulting joint efforts.

Marielza Oliveira
Director, UNESCO Cluster Office in Beijing



First of all, I would like to congratulate the Korean National Commission for UNESCO for the initiative to conduct a preliminary survey to collect information and identify **common needs in the areas of UNESCO's competence** in collaboration with the other nine National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia. The result of this survey will serve a base for possible more in-depth research and/or a joint project among National Commissions in 2021.

National Commissions have a critical role to play in supporting UNESCO in fulfilling its mandate, particularly in the context of work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their implementation at country level. **National Commissions are UNESCO's partner in mobilizing authorities, partners, experts** and beneficiaries in their respective countries, and collaborating with other countries to address common challenges that go beyond national border.

The joint projects among the National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia will contribute to the identification of common priorities and building positive synergies among the National Commissions to more effectively **work towards UNESCO's objectives.**

UNESCO Jakarta as the Regional Bureau for Science in Asia and the Pacific is very much welcome to the initiative as a follow up to the 2018 Gyeongju Recommendation. The initiative will not only strengthen the cooperation among the National Commissions but also contribute to completion of the Strategic Transformation of the Organization by providing East and Southeast Asian **National Commissions' perspectives on major trends and future challenges in UNESCO's fields of competence in the sub-region.**

I would like to thank the Korean National Commission for UNESCO for their strong support and commitment to tackle the challenges of the implementation of Agenda 2030, especially in Asia Pacific region. We look forward to work together to achieve the SDGs and left no one behind.

Shahbaz Khan
Director, UNESCO Office, Jakarta
Regional Bureau for Science in Asia and the Pacific

The Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO

The Governments of the States Parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare:

That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;

That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war;

That the great and terrible war which has now ended was a war made possible by the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men, and by the propagation, in their place, through ignorance and prejudice, of the doctrine of the inequality of men and races;

That the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern;

That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

For these reasons, the States Parties to this Constitution, believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding **and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives;**

In consequence whereof they do hereby create the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established and which its Charter proclaims.

16 November 1945

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Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO

Dr. Menghong CHHUM

Ms. Zoe CASELLI



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

គណៈកម្មការជាតិយូណេស្កូកម្ពុជា
Cambodian National Commission
for UNESCO
Commission Nationale du Cambodge
pour l'UNESCO

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FOREWORD

Since its establishment, the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO (Cambodian NatCom) has played a leading, active and important role as a headquarters of the Royal Government of Cambodia in significant fields under its purview, including, but not limited to, culture, heritage work, and education. It is worth highlighting that it has been carrying out cultural diplomacy which contributes to the interests and the development of Cambodia in accordance with **UNESCO's main priorities, activities and programmes.**

I would like to extend my appreciation for KNCU's kind gesture in providing for not only the Cambodian NatCom but also regional NatComs the opportunity to be part of this joint research project, which is very insightful and beneficial for all NatComs.

Given the international character of the project, a strategy is being pursued to create collaboration between the Cambodian NatCom within the region with KNCU in particular where support is generated from interest to participate, not to mention that this project is one that reflects their own national priorities, significances and challenges. Hence, it will be a useful guideline for future and further priorities.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to KNCU and partners for making this research and technical assistance possible. I wish you the best with your endeavours.

UN Bophanna
Secretary-General
Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO

PROFILE OF THE CAMBODIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO – abbreviated as “Cambodian NatCom” - was re-established in 1997 by the **Royal Government of Cambodia’s** (RGC) Decision under the initiative of the Councils of Ministers. Later in 2017, the Executive Board of the National Commission was transferred to the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA). The National Commission plays an important role as headquarters of the RGC in many UNESCO-related fields.

Nowadays, H.E. Dr. Phoeurng Sackona, Minister of MCFA, is the Chairperson of the commission. Currently, the National Commission has a Secretariat and Office based in Phnom Penh, which is tasked to operate its administrative work, as well as its activities. The Cambodian NatCom is composed of 8 staff members. It is led by one Secretary-General (H.E. Mrs. Un Bophanna) and one Deputy Secretary-General (H.E. Dr Chuum Menghong), and accompanied by one finance official, three contract staff, and two advisors.

Besides the collaboration with the MCFA, especially in the context of the cultural portion of its activities, the Cambodian NatCom also works closely with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on educational priorities. Furthermore, the National Commission can count on many other actors in its national networks through the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, and other national entities in Cambodia.

To implement its activities, the Cambodian NatCom relies on an annual budget somewhat below 100,000 USD, acquired from the MCFA and provided for by the Ministry of Economics and Finance. This annual budget varies each year in accordance with the situation of the national incomes and economy. Usually, the National Commission uses the allocated budget to tackle three main objectives: (1) supporting the administrative operations within the organisation; (2)

implementing national priorities with a main focus on four fields: Culture, Education, Science and Nature, Society and Humanity; and (3) strengthening the national agenda for International Affairs in its fields of competence through cultural diplomacy. In addition to the national budget, the Cambodian NatCom also receives some funding from UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Along with this, it also has the opportunity to request funds from other complimentary mechanisms of UNESCO under specific project proposals, namely the Participation Programme (PP), the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), and so on.

1. PAST: CHRONOLOGY OF THE CAMBODIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CAMBODIA

The Kingdom of Cambodia is a Southeast Asian country that neighbours Thailand to the northwest, Lao PDR to the northeast, Vietnam to the east, and the Gulf of Thailand to the southwest. The Kingdom of Cambodia is the only country in the world to feature a World Heritage Site on its national flag. In fact, the image of Angkor Wat appears on every flag that the country has had – for a total of 5 – since it gained independence from France in 1953.

Many Cambodian people believe they descend from the Khmers, heir of the Angkor Empire – or Khmer Empire – that extended from Southern China over most of mainland Southeast Asia. In 802 AD, on the ashes of the former fractured kingdoms of Funan and Chenla, Jayavarman II declared himself universal monarch and paved the way for its empire to flourish and for Hinduism, followed by Buddhism, to spread to most of the Southeast Asian region. Taking in consideration the agricultural systems found in the area of Angkor, scholars believe that the capital city of the Khmer Empire hosted a population of between 750,000 and 1 million people, mainly farmers, which makes it the largest pre-industrial city in the world. The Khmer Empire reached its highest expansion and splendour between the 10th and 13th centuries when it began to decline until its

fall in the 15th century.

Hammered between the pressure of its neighbours, Ayutthaya of Thailand (Siam) and the Nguyen dynasty of Vietnam (Annam), in 1863 His Majesty King Norodom I asked for the protection of France, and Cambodia eventually became part of the French Protectorate of Indochina. French rule lasted until 1953, when Cambodia regained full independence under the guidance of His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk.

After independence, the Kingdom of Cambodia benefitted from years of peace and prosperity. However, by the late 1960s, the Vietnam War drew its shadow on its neighbour despite it having declared its neutrality. In March 1970, backed by the US who often attacked across the border, General Lon Nol ousted Norodom Sihanouk from leadership. Sihanouk had previously abdicated in favour of his father to descend directly into politics. General Lon Nol took advantage of a visit abroad by Sihanouk to perorate on the cause of the Cambodian people, and seized power forming a new government – later establishing the Khmer Republic - while in the countryside small groups of Cambodian communists began recruiting discontented peasants. This was the start of the civil war. In the midst of the instability, Americans and South Vietnamese invaded Cambodia to pursue what they called North Vietnamese 'military sanctuaries', who in turn moved deeper into Cambodia and helped the Khmer Rouge to organise and expand. Five years later, what had previously been small communist guerrilla forces entered Phnom Penh on the 17th of April 1975. Within 2 days the population of the capital city was driven into the countryside, ending the civil war but opening the way to one of the darkest and most suffering-filled times of the Cambodian history: the genocide. The goal of Pol Pot, the leader of the Khmer Rouge, was a complete revolution aiming at transforming Cambodia into a utopian peasant-dominated agrarian society called Democratic Kampuchea. While cutting the country off from the outside world, the Khmer Rouge forced the entire population into forced labour, while intellectuals, artists, performers, doctors, and teachers were targeted and executed as threat to the regime, and dissent was purged. It is estimated that in the 3 years, 8 months, and 20 days that followed, almost a quarter of the population died from executions, overwork,

diseases, and malnutrition. Old tensions with Vietnam also came to the surface. Troubled by Cambodian military incursions at the border, in 1979 Vietnam entered Cambodia while the forces of Pol Pot fled west to the jungle at the border with Thailand, where they settled until their complete surrender in 1999. The People's Republic of Kampuchea was established on 8 January 1979, and the Vietnamese presence in the country lasted until 1989.

Following the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) started the first exercise of the United Nations in taking over the operations of a country, organising and holding the elections of 1993. At that occasion, the monarchy was restored and a new chapter of the history of the Cambodian people began. Since then, the Kingdom of Cambodia has been a constitutional monarchy governed by the leadership of its current Prime Minister, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

THE BIRTH OF THE CAMBODIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Cambodia was admitted to UNESCO on the 3rd of July 1951. The Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO (Cambodian NatCom) was first established shortly after, in the same year, and placed under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Just the following year, starting from the 23rd of May 1952, the Cambodian NatCom was transferred to the patronage of the Ministry of National Education. This decision reflected the main operational focus attributed to the Office at the time. Consequently, the Ministry of National Education became the President of the Cambodian NatCom, while four Vice Presidents worked at his side. The Secretary-General at the time was Mr Hong-Hoeung-Doeung, and the office included a total of around 20 personnel that were in charge of the development and implementation of the programmes. The purpose of the establishment of the Cambodian NatCom and its consequent objectives were to:

- raise awareness and sensitise the citizens to the notion of peace both at the national and international levels;
- improve the levels of education on science and culture-related subjects;

- involve the public and inform them of the programmes and activities of UNESCO;
- closely cooperate with other Member States and National Commissions;
- initiate research in the framework of education, science, and culture;
- communicate and disseminate results of research matters in the field of work of UNESCO; and
- participate in conferences and regional seminars organised by UNESCO or its Member States.

A retrieved document concerning the activities of the Cambodian NatCom between 1970 and 1971, published by the journal *Kampuchea Soriya* (1926-1974) and available online on the website of the Buddhist Institute, informs about the structure of the office, which at that time had its headquarters in Phnom Penh on Red Cross Street, nowadays the Street of the French Institute.

At the meeting of the 30th of June 1971, followed by a confirmative one held on the 10th of September of the same year, it was decided that the Cambodian NatCom would assume the following structure:

- the Minister in charge would cover the role of President of the Cambodian NatCom, and the President would be flanked by 4 Vice Presidents;
- the Cambodian NatCom would be composed of 2 offices. The Office in charge of the Programmes would be divided into 4 sections, namely for Education, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Culture, and Information. This Office would be supported by the Office of General Administration composed of 3 sections in charge of Administration, the Reception Desk, and Human Resources and Accounting.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS PER DECADE

1950-1970

The inception phase of the activities of the Cambodian NatCom in the 1950s was marked by its belonging to the Ministry of National Education. The main focus

was directed to the improvement of the alphabetisation levels of the Cambodian citizens, along with the betterment of education offered by the national system. The "Reports of Member States" presented to UNESCO's General Conference at its 8th session in Montevideo (November-December 1954) states that, after its establishment, the Cambodian NatCom maintained direct and permanent contact with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris through the Science Co-Operation Office in Manila. Close contact was also set by the Secretariat of the Cambodian NatCom with relevant Ministries and governmental departments. Moreover, it participated in numerous meetings organised by UNESCO in Thailand, New Zealand, Ceylon, and Tokyo, while the General Conference and any other UNESCO meetings were attended by a Cambodian delegation that included representatives of the National Commission. At the same time, two missions by UNESCO's experts were facilitated in the country between 1952 and 1954 - one on free and compulsory education, and the other on fundamental education. A programme was also developed for adult education. It is worth noting that in 1969 Cambodia received the gold medal in the context of the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Prize - corresponding to 5,000 USD - which rewarded efforts in the field of alphabetisation.

Last but not least, in 1954 the Cambodian NatCom established two sub-committees: the first was meant to deal with problems of education for living in a world community, while the second tackled matters related to youth and sports. The report also informs that Cambodia expressed its intention in principle to accept the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which was indeed adopted in 1954 and then ratified on the 4th of April 1962.

The 4th Regional Conference of the National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia (Bangkok, February 1964) was an occasion for the Cambodian NatCom to update **its regional peers on the progress of its participation to UNESCO's "Major Project on Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values", a decade-long programme that was meant to favour connections between the people of the two sides of the world.** In particular, the Cambodian NatCom contributed to the publication of documentation on the culture of its country by means of 3

elements: UNESCO's Project on Visual Aid Kits; "La Famille de Nou-Mèn", a children's book; and "Tales of Cambodia/Contes du Cambodge", reading material for use in teaching about Eastern cultures.

For what concerns additional information available on other UNESCO related activities, the above mentioned report published by the magazine *Kampuchea Soriya* makes a reference to the participation of the Cambodian NatCom to the ordinary programme in the framework of UN-UNESCO for the restoration and conservation of monuments and historic sites in 1968. However, because of the internal instability resulting in the civil war that led up to the coup of 1970, it was not possible to implement this Programme, and the tangible heritage of the country suffered from the lack of maintenance measures.

1970-1990

As one may expect, the history of the Cambodian NatCom is unavoidably linked to the history of the country. The 1970s represents the start of deeply challenging decades for the Cambodian people which would last until the 1990s. On the 18th of March 1970, General Lon Nol requested to the National Assembly to vote on the future of Prince Norodom's leadership, which resulted in his deposition and in the emergence of Lon Nol as Prime Minister of the newly formed government of the Khmer Republic. This move led to the start of the so-called Cambodian Civil War.

It is worth noting that the vast majority of historical information concerning the activities of the Cambodian NatCom – both before and during the conflict - went lost during that time, and it is extremely difficult to retrieve it for the sake of this report.

In June 1970, in light of the contingent events that the country was facing, Cambodia put in place the National Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflicts, which was named COPROBIC. The annual report of activities of the COPROBIC, which covers the period from the 24th of June 1970 to the 31st of December 1979, informs the reader that Mr

Duong Sarin, the Secretary-General of the Cambodian NatCom - at that time called the National Khmer Commission for UNESCO - was also assigned to cover the position of Secretary of COPROBIC. In fact, the Royal Government of Cambodia ratified the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict on the 4th of April 1962, becoming therefore entitled to the protection ensured by that treaty.

By levying the appropriate articles of the 1954 Hague Convention on behalf of the Cambodian government, COPROBIC tried on the 11th of June 1970 to draw the attention of the global public towards the cause of the salvation of the Cambodian heritage. The message by the government recalled the penetration of the soldiers of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and of the forces of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (Vietcong) in close vicinity to the remains of the Angkorian temples, in the province of Siem Reap. It went on to condemn the attacks of the opposing forces to all religious and cultural monuments, and called upon the signatory parties to take on the necessary measures to aid Cambodia to have its artistic heritage respected. The text of the Annex to the declaration of the Cambodian Delegation to UNESCO of the 21st of October 1970 included the reference to the totality of the Park of Angkor and its immediate vicinities – such as Kulen, Banteay Srei, and Roluos – as being occupied, along with the great site of the North East (Koh Ker) and East (Beng Mealea, Preah Khan de Kompong Svay, and Sambor Prei Kuk) as lost with no possible connection.

Moreover, the Cambodian authorities invoked the Article 23 of the 1954 Convention that opened the way for receiving technical support by UNESCO. Indeed, two experts, Mr André Noblecourt and Mr Vadime Elisseeff, were sent to elaborate a plan for protection against potential attacks on cultural buildings, such as the Angkor Conservation and National Museums of Phnom Penh and of Wat Po Veal in Battambang. In particular, Mr Elisseeff, a founding member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and art historian specialised in the Far East, also had valuable experience in the protection of cultural property during armed conflicts, and was sent to help on the legislative and technical aspects of the application of certain dispositions of the 1954 Hague Convention. In the

meantime, this Committee proceeded to signal the position of the most relevant Cambodian monuments and deposits of works of art by affixing the distinctive sign of the 1954 Hague Convention, the International Committee of the Blue Shield, on them.

In March 1972, Cambodia was already deeply affected by the war. In the framework of the Article 8 of the 1954 Hague Convention, the authorities presented a request to UNESCO to grant Special Protection to the national heritage through its entry in the International Register of Cultural Property under Special Protection. The request was addressed to the then-Director-General of UNESCO, Mr René Maheu, on the 31st of March 1972, as he was directly in charge of the Register. The High Contracting Parties were informed on the 25th of April 1972, almost exactly 10 years after Cambodia ratified the Convention. However, some State Parties to the Convention, namely Cuba, Egypt, Romania, and Yugoslavia, who questioned the legitimacy of the Cambodian government, raised objections to the request which eventually led to its failure.

In consequence to this, the Cambodian authorities at the time resorted to the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which was ratified by Cambodia on the 26th of September 1972. But after this, the country crumbled under the spires of the conflict, the Cambodian NatCom was forced to close officially in 1975, and all traces of its activities became lost. On the 17th of April 1975 Phnom Penh fell under the forces of the Khmer Rouge, the communist movement headed by Pol Pot.

Between 1975 and 1979, the government of Democratic Kampuchea spread pain and suffering on the Cambodian population. It not only destroyed the health, the wealth, the education, and the morale of the citizens, but it also attacked its civilisation. Artistic and cultural expressions, such as the Royal ballet, were forgotten through the enforcement of hard labour, while the intellectual elite faced death and torture because of its place in Khmer society. The University of Fine Arts was closed and there was no formal artistic schooling as the only remaining form of art was devoted to propaganda, where the message is more

important than the art itself. Many artists, musicians, and dancers were killed. Once highly appreciated and supported figures, the disappearance of the Royal Family weakened the intangible heritage of the country. In the 1980s, the Minister of Information and Culture, Chheng Phon, a prominent artist and professor, declared that the regime of the Khmer Rouge almost completely destroyed the national culture and that it killed nearly 80% of the performers. Other reliable sources affirmed that around 90% of the **country's** teachers and professors died, and that of the 380,000 artists and intellectuals only 300 survived.

At the arrival of the Vietnamese in Cambodia in January 1979, the country needed to redress itself from its ruins and the political dialogues multiplied until the Paris Peace Agreements of the 23rd of October 1991.

1990-2000

On the 1st of September 1991 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Koat Norodom Sihanouk, H.M. King of Cambodia, sent out an appeal to the attention of the public opinion of the **world to "Save Angkor"**. In response to this, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Federico Mayor, paid a visit to Angkor in November 1991. In the same month, Cambodia accepted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

At the request of His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk, the Nomination File was prepared for the 16th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Santa Fe, USA. After discussions, on the 14th of December 1992 the site of Angkor was inscribed on the World Heritage List and List of World Heritage in Danger simultaneously. The nomination included the entire site, comprising 40,100 ha of land and 91 classified monuments.

As a sign of the importance bestowed to culture and art, his son, the current King of Cambodia, His Majesty Preah Karuna Preah Bat Sâmdech Preah Bâromneath Norodom Sihamoni, then His Royal Highness Sdech Krom Luong, was designated by the Kingdom of Cambodia as Ambassador to the Delegation of

Cambodia to UNESCO in November 1993, a position that he held until 2004 when he was appointed King.

The inscription of Angkor on the World Heritage List was conditioned to the elaboration of 5 documents. Being a country left with no structure, UNDP and UNESCO, along with France and Japan, contributed to the establishment, and then implementation, of adequate obligations and means for protection. The first international conference on Angkor was organised in Tokyo in October 1993 with the participation of several members of the international community eager to help Cambodia. There it was decided to create the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC-Angkor), co-chaired by Japan and France, with UNESCO acting as Secretariat. This Committee met for the first time in Phnom Penh between the 21st and 23rd of December 1993, starting a tradition of success. The ICC-Angkor still meets twice a year, once in plenary session and once under its Technical Committee. After the fulfilment of the obligations to which it was bound, Angkor was withdrawn from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2004.

To face the increasing workload, **the Royal Government of Cambodia re-created the National Commission for UNESCO through Decision 39 dated 12 October 1997**, and placed it under the responsibility of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Dr Sok An became President of the Cambodian NatCom and headed the institution until his death on the 15th of March 2017. Next to him, H.E. Mr Ung Sean was appointed Secretary-General of the Cambodian NatCom, while being Deputy Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs. He was replaced on the 17th of June 1999 by H.E. Mrs Tan Theany, who guided the activities of the National Commission until 2019 when she was nominated Counsellor for her merits to the development of the institution.

Through the collaboration between the Cambodian NatCom and UNESCO, the Nomination File for the Tonlé Sap was prepared, and the natural site of outstanding value for both its environmental and socio-economic characteristics was inscribed on the List of the Man and Biosphere Programme on the 15th of December 1997. In these first years, the close collaboration between the

Cambodian NatCom and the Scientific Secretariat of ICC-Angkor begun. The National Commission demonstrated itself to be a valuable partner throughout all phases of the development of the institution, offering support and establishing itself as bridge between the different actors involved in the protection of the archaeological park of Angkor, including the APSARA (Authority for the Protection of the Site and the Development of the Angkor Region) for the Management of Angkor and of the Region of Siem Reap, and beyond.

2000-2019¹

At the dawn of its re-establishment, the main objectives of the Cambodian NatCom were preventative conservation and to draw visibility to the activity of UNESCO in the country, not only in the cities, but especially in the villages and in the provinces, where the work of the organisation was needed the most. This is just as true nowadays as it was then, as the Cambodian NatCom strives to reach the most marginalised communities and include them as beneficiaries of its projects.

Through the Participation Programme, the Cambodian NatCom managed support craftsmanship in particular, so that the ancient *savoir faire* would not be lost. After the war, Cambodia was left with deep scars in its social tissue. It was in need on one side to rebuild its educational system, both formal and informal, and on the other to revive the artistic and cultural environment. The old generations, the repository of the requisite knowledge and the skills, were connected with the young so that the first could pass on the tools to the latter, and, at the same time, ensure that crafts became a source of financial support for families and communities of both.

Along its self-initiated projects, the Cambodian NatCom engaged with the relevant actors both in the government and among international partners, to advance in the field of cultural protection. The National Commission worked as a

1 The activities and main contributions reported in this section are corroborated by both the study of key documents of the period and by multiple interviews conducted with H.E. Mrs Tan Theany, former Secretary-General of the Cambodian NatCom (1999-2019), and current Counsellor.

bridge between them to allow the objectives to be concretised and the success of the efforts amplified. In particular, in 1996 the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Cambodia was promulgated, while the international legal framework received special attention by the RGC.

On the 1st of January 2003, the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention entered into force in Cambodia. Moreover, between 2003 and 2007 Cambodia was a Member of the Executive Board of UNESCO. On the 13th of June 2006, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage was ratified. Soon the Royal Ballet, also known as Khmer Classical Dance, was added to the List of Intangible Heritage of Humanity (proclaimed in 2003 and inscribed in 2008). The performance of this dance has been closely associated with the Khmer court for over one thousand years. Traditionally it accompanies royal ceremonies and observances such as coronations, marriages, funerals or Khmer holidays.

This was followed by the Great Shadow Theatre or Sbaek Thom (25th of November 2005), and by the Tugging Rituals and Games. The latter was presented in cooperation with the Republic of Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines. On the 30th of November 2016, Chapei Dong Veng joined the List of Intangible Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. This Cambodian musical tradition involves the chapei - a type of lute often played at cultural festivals - accompanied by singing. Lyrics range from the educational and a type of social commentary, to satire while incorporating traditional poems, folk tales or Buddhist stories. As it is transmitted orally within families and through informal master-apprentice relationships, this art is practised by few performers and even fewer masters exist.

Accompanied by the support of the Cambodian NatCom and UNESCO, on the 19th of September 2007, Cambodia ratified the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, while on the 24th of November of the same year it was the turn of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage to be ratified.

On the 7th of July 2008, the Temple of Preah Vihear was inscribed on the World

Heritage List. This inscription celebrated years of work by the RGC in cooperation with UNESCO and the Cambodian NatCom to have it protected for its outstanding universal value. In order to preserve the site, UNESCO and its national counterpart assisted the RGC in the setting up of the International Coordinating Committee for the Conservation and Enhancement of the Temple of Preah Vihear (ICC-Preah Vihear), which follows the management model of the Angkor World Heritage Site. ICC-Preah Vihear also works in close collaboration with the National Authority for Preah Vihear, in the same way that ICC-Angkor does with the APSARA National Authority.

On another note, the following year and in the context of the Memory of the World Programme, the Cambodian NatCom contributed to seeing the Archives of the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum included in the International Register, and the Recording of the Reamker - a Cambodian epic poem, based on the Sanskrit Ramayana epic – into the Regional Asia-Pacific Register (2014).

In 2013, the Cambodian NatCom, along with the RGC, UNESCO and its national and international partners, celebrated the success of the 20 years of the inscription of Angkor to the World Heritage List. On this occasion, the President of the Cambodian NatCom praised the efforts of the entire national and international community that jointly contributed to the success of the experience. Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO at that time, paid a special visit to Cambodia to celebrate the event highlighting the strong ties that link the Kingdom with UNESCO and its partners.

In 2013, the Cambodian NatCom also lent its support to the RGC in the context of its Presidency of the World Heritage Committee. The 37th Session of the Committee was held between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap from the 16th to the 27th of June. In fact, H.E. Dr Sok An, President of the Cambodian NatCom, was Chairperson in that occasion.

In the same year of the celebration of the 20 years of the inscription of Angkor and of the Cambodian Presidency of the World Heritage Committee, Cambodia was also elected Member of the Committee of the 1999 Second Protocol of the

Hague Convention of 1954, which it remained until its Presidency in 2017. In this year, at the request of the RGC, the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, during the meeting held from the 29th to 30th of November 2017 **at UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris**, granted the status of Enhanced Protection to Angkor. Cambodia is at its second mandate in the Committee since 2018 and will remain so until 2021.

The Cambodian NatCom has been an active supporter of the RGC in the context of the Hague Convention since its initial engagement. More recently, between the 1st and 3rd of September 2015, in partnership with UNESCO, the National Commission organised the ASEAN Regional Seminar on the UNESCO 1954 Hague Convention in Preah Vihear. This initiative brought together members of the police and armed forces, and representatives of ASEAN countries such as Lao PDR, Malaysia and the Philippines, along with high-level officials. Contributions to the seminar came from H.I.R.H. The Archduke Karl von Habsburg of Austria (President of the Austrian Committee of the Blue Shield), Ms Artemis Papathanassiou and Mr Benjamin Goes (current and former Chairpersons of the UNESCO Inter-governmental Committee of the Second Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention), Ms Kelisiana Thynne (Regional Legal Advisor of the International Committee of the Red Cross), and Mr Etienne Clement (Director of the UNESCO Office for Asia and the Pacific and expert of the 1954 Hague Convention), next to many notable contributors at the national level.

Following the death of Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Cambodian NatCom, H.E. Dr Sok An, the Royal Decree NS/DR/0317/313 dated 30/03/2017 transferred the Cambodian NatCom to the authority of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, which resulted in the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, H.E. Dr Phoeurng Sackona, becoming its President. The Cambodian NatCom was then equipped with a new document of re-creation: The Royal Kret NS/DR/0417/396, whose details at Article 1 give to the National Commission a new composition.

Under the new leadership, the Cambodian NatCom kept its high profile and continued acting as facilitator of many activities in the fields of UNESCO's competence. In particular, for what concerns the Conventions sponsored by

UNESCO, the institution worked with the other national actors to:

- have the Temple Zone of Sambor Prei Kuk, Archaeological Site of Ancient Ishanapura, inscribed on the World Heritage List, on the 8th of July 2017. This «Temple in the richness of the forest» was the capital of the Chenla Empire that flourished in the late 6th and early 7th centuries AD. The site includes more than a hundred temples, ten of which are octagonal, which is a unique feature in Southeast Asia. Sandstone elements in the site are also characteristic of the pre-Angkor decorative idiom;
- present the Panji Tales Manuscripts jointly with Indonesia, the Netherlands, Malaysia and the United Kingdom, and then have it included in the Memory of the World Register (30th of October 2017). These stories from the 13th century tell the adventures of the Prince Paji, a Javanese hero searching for his beloved Princess Candra Kirana, becoming one of the most popular pieces of literature in Southeast Asia during the 17th and 18th centuries;
- add the Lkhon Khol on the List of Intangible Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding protected by the 2003 Convention, on the 28th of November 2018. Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet revolves around one community surrounding a Buddhist monastery, Wat Svay Andet – located 10 km eastward of Phnom Penh on the Mekong River – where men perform wearing masks accompanied by a traditional orchestra and melodious recitation. It is performed for ritual purposes, and its transmission happens orally within the community. This form of intangible heritage is threatened by environmental factors, insufficient resources, economic migration, and the 14-year gap of its transmission between 1970 and 1984.

Between 2018 and 2019, the Cambodian NatCom oversaw and participated in five projects in the context of the Participation Programme:

- “Traineeship for young people on heritage management”: a project implemented with the APSARA National Authority and in partnership with the Union of Federations of Young Cambodians. The objective was to share knowledge on common issues of cultural management, give examples of regional solidarity, and raise awareness among youngsters on the value of

cultural heritage. The project included young people from Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia;

- “Creation of a General Index of the journal *Kampuchea Soriya* (1926-2019). Revive and valorise an exceptional Cambodian heritage fund”: this review was the first academic example entirely written in the Khmer language, one that addressed culture, art, and human sciences. It is a major monument of the modern heritage of Cambodia;
- “Capacity enhancement of women in the zone of Angkor for sustainable development”: implemented jointly with the APSARA National Authority, the objective of the project was to provide continuous theoretical and practical training on why the forest is a constitutive element of the landscape and a national and universal value that needs protection;
- “Preventive heritage conservation”: this training programme with the APSARA National Authority was meant to insist on prevention, maintenance and security in Angkor Wat, Ta Nei, and the Royal Pagoda of Siem Reap, along with teachings on preventive conservation for heritage property and for tourism; and
- “Digitalisation of the collections of the National Library of the Kingdom of Cambodia”: the aim was to preserve and ensure physical and virtual access by developing a database of special collections (documents before 1975, rare images, manuscripts on palm tree leaves, and series articles).

2. PRESENT: MAIN PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CAMBODIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS

2020 is a year of both transition and continuity for the Cambodian NatCom. On the 5th of November 2019, H.E. Mrs Un Bophanna was appointed as a new Secretary-General of the Cambodian NatCom, and new resources, such as the Deputy Secretary-General H.E. Dr Chuum Menghong, joined the office around the same period to help in the task of setting its new direction. In fact, for the last 20 years, H.E. Mrs Tan Theany led the work of the Cambodian NatCom with

wisdom and passion, giving great lustre to the institution. While she remains as Counsellor, her efforts were taken up by H.E. Mr Lim Bun Hok before, who focused on planning for the improvement of the premises of the office and of its human resources, among other projects, and then by H.E. Mrs Un.

The new management, in continuity with what the Cambodian NatCom has represented in the past for both its national and international partners, aims at establishing an environment of collaboration and mutual support with all actors involved for the development of the education, science, culture, and information sectors in Cambodia. In particular, in 2020 culture and education have been put at the core of the priorities of the National Commission².

The main highlights of the activities carried on by the National Commission can be linked to the following programmes:

- The Cambodian NatCom leans on the heritage of its own successful past engagement in the context of the 1970 UNESCO Convention, and retains its activism in the field. In 2019, Ms Zoe Caselli, consultant of the Cambodian NatCom, participated on behalf of the institution in the seminar organised by the Thai NatCom and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok **titled “Sub-regional Executive Symposium for Ministerial Officials on International Cooperation to Protect Cultural Properties”**. **In this occasion**, the Cambodian NatCom had the opportunity to revive its connections with its Thai counterpart, and to exchange and discuss with experts in the topic. Representatives of UNESCO Headquarters, UNIDROIT, INTERPOL, ICOM, etc. were among the participants, along with members of the relevant institutions of countries such as China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and others. This year, the Cambodian NatCom is set to cooperate with the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh to publish a book about the return of Khmer antiquities and cultural objects to the Royal Government of Cambodia. In fact, since the start of the research and consequent action to repatriate some of the Khmer art that was scattered around the world as a result of

2 The content of this section comes from a series of interviews conducted with H.E. Mrs Un Bophanna and H.E. Dr Chuom Menghong, respectively the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General of the Cambodian NatCom, in September 2020.

past internal turmoil and fragility that made borders porous and laws difficult to enforce, the Cambodian NatCom has been on the side of the RGC, along with the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh, to offer as much support as is in its capacities to turn those efforts into success;

- Currently, the Cambodian NatCom is also working for the organisation of the Technical Meeting on its UNESCO Tentative Intangible Heritage List. In its capacity, the National Commission gives its contribution to the RGC in defining the value of some of its cultural features, such as oral traditions, arts, craftsmanship, and rituals, in the hope of inscribing them on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in the future. Until now, Cambodia can pride itself of 5 elements on that list: a) Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet (2018), b) Chapei Dang Veng (2016), c) Tugging rituals and games (2015), d) Royal Ballet of Cambodia (2008), and e) Sbek Thom, Khmer shadow theatre (2008). The Cambodian NatCom, along with its partners, shares the wishes that more cultural practices will be added to the List when appropriate;
- Another important activity relates to the participation of the Cambodian NatCom in the working group set up for the documentation in preparation of the dossier for the Banteay Chhmar temple. The temple is located in the northwest of Cambodia, and, like Angkor Thom, it dates to the reign of Jayavarman VII (late 12th or early 13th century). Because of its remote location, the temple suffered from looting in the past, while some of its finest features are already being protected and showcased in the National Museum of Phnom Penh;
- In the meanwhile, the Cambodian NatCom is also devoting its efforts to the reporting of the implementation of the Participation Programme of UNESCO for the 2018-2019 period. The time and resources were allocated in the context of five activities, among which the main ones were: (a) the cooperation with the APSARA National Authority for the Management of Angkor and of the Region of Siem Reap to organise a workshop on cultural heritage conservation; (b) the creation of the digital archives of the National Library of Phnom Penh; and (c) the collaboration with the Buddhist Institute of Cambodia to compose the index of the articles that were published in the review *Kambuja Suriya* focusing on literacy, art, and

religion.

- Next to this, the Cambodian NatCom is offering its support to all parties concerned, both governmental and non-governmental, for the effective implementation of the activities related to the sites of 1972 World Heritage Convention, namely Angkor (1992), the Temple of Preah Vihear (2008), and the Temple Zone of Sambor Prei Kuk, Archaeological Site of Ancient Ishanapura (2017). In particular, the report around Sambor Prei Kuk requires continued monitoring;
- Furthermore, the Cambodian NatCom is joining its governmental counterparts in the activities for the preparation of the dossier on Koh Ker for the inscription of the site on the World Heritage List;
- Last but not least, the Cambodian NatCom is acting as focal point for the preparation of the exercise linked to the Periodic Reporting to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, which for Cambodia covers the years between 2018 and 2023.

In the education sector, the Cambodian NatCom works in close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh. Together, and with the contribution and support of the relevant authorities, among other projects, the National Commission:

- **participates with inputs for the running of the “Factory Literacy Programme” (FLP) funded by the UNESCO Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education**, and implemented by the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh, the International Labour Organisation, Sipar, Cambodian Women for Peace and Development, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). The programme is for the women workers employed in 25 garment factories in Phnom Penh and other provincial areas of Cambodia, and consists of literacy and numerical skills, sided by improved confidence in their relationship with colleagues and families. From 2016 to 2018, through the FLP, 880 female learners (out of a total of 924 learners) were empowered by the completion of the literacy training after passing a test evaluated by the MoEYS as equivalent to grade 6; and
- supports the implementation of the Global Partnership for Education. **Cambodia’s MoEYS is committed to achieving SDG 4 and continues to**

strive to minimise skills gaps by collaborating with stakeholders and by introducing digital education. The third round of the GPE's project was launched in 2018 among partners such as the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh, UNICEF, and MoEYS, along with the cooperation of the European Union, Sweden, USAID, and others. The Cambodian NatCom contributes in particular to the discussions around the implementation of the national programme aimed at strengthening the quality of the pedagogical skills of **teachers, titled "Strengthening Teacher Education Programme in Cambodia"** (STEPCam).

At the same time, the Cambodian NatCom is currently engaged in the implementation of the Participation Programme for the 2020-2021 period. Three projects were selected by UNESCO Headquarters in Paris for the relevance and appropriateness of their impact on the context of the country:

- **"Capacity Building and Awareness Raising to Conserve the Wild Orchid and Botanic Garden in Cambodia"**: through the Sok An-Phnom Kulen Orchid Research and Conservation Centre (the Orchid Centre), this project involves the provinces of Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey, Koh Kong, Mondulkiri, and Ratanakiri. The objectives are: a) to conduct training on specific plants and wild orchids, with a particular focus on stopping illegal collecting; b) the identification, inventory, and determination of criteria and ecological functions of wild orchids in their own environment in accordance with up-to-date scientific processes; c) to conduct training on safeguarding wild orchids from extinction through tissue culturing and breeding; d) to raise the awareness levels of the public and of key policy makers; and e) to engage public participation for the improvement of local livelihoods;
- **"Creating a Digital Inventory of the Art Collection in the Angkor Conservation Office" (Siem Reap Province)**: this project aims at answering to the needs of compliance with current international museum and archival procedures and norms; to respect the standards of the International Cultural Heritage Law; and to enhance the capacities of Ministry officials and staff in creating a strategic framework to safeguard the cultural heritage of the Kingdom of Cambodia. This proposal additionally aims to

train and equip staff and officials to create and establish a digital archive of the Collection of the Angkor Conservation Office (ACO), Department of Safeguarding and Preservation of Monuments, General Department of Heritage, and Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Apart from a small number of artefacts in the ACO Collection photographed by the École Française d'Extrême Orient, there is no formal archive of images. Thus, it is of utmost importance to photograph the collection, and reconcile written, archival records and notes with images of the objects. Further, to increase access to the collection for scholars and researchers, the need to create a digital archive is of paramount importance. 550 objects in one storage room are selected for operational work, while 7 people will join this project, 3 women and 4 men. The project duration is 18 months; and

- **“Cultural Heritage Education” (Phnom Penh and Kampong Thom Provinces):** this project aims at educating the younger generation, especially students, about the importance and value of cultural heritage. In addition, it aims at inspiring students to open their hearts to the task of preserving and protecting the cultural heritage of their region. It is hoped that they will continue to engage with cultural heritage with their families and communities if they have built a deep understanding of the value and significance of the matter. The activities involve: a) creating a guidebook about cultural heritage focusing on the typology of heritage and on laws protecting cultural heritage ; b) setting up a launching ceremony about the guidebook regarding cultural heritage in Phnom Penh; c) publishing the completed guidebook on cultural heritage for students from various educational institutions in Kampong Thom; d) training and educating students in educational institutions in Kampong Thom about the theories and practices behind the importance and value of cultural heritage; e) organising study visits for students from different educational institutions in Kampong Thom to tour the cultural heritage of their area.

MAJOR NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

The Cambodian NatCom's first **role is to serve as an effective “headquarters”** or coordinating agency for the Royal Government of Cambodia in the development

of programmes in fields of competence of UNESCO, namely education, culture, social sciences, communication and information. To perform the tasks at its best, the Cambodian NatCom relies on a developed network of partnerships, both at the national and international level.

On one side, to support the achievement of the goals set by the RGC at national level, the National Commission joins a pool of institutions, national authorities, and organisations active in promoting the advancement of the relevant SDGs, among which those that are particularly relevant are:

- the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, under whose umbrella the Cambodian NatCom works;
- the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports;
- the Ministry of Environment;
- the Ministry of Information;
- the Ministry of Tourism;
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation;
- the APSARA National Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Siem Reap Region;
- the National Authority for Preah Vihear;
- the National Authority for Sambor Prei Kuk;
- the Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of Cambodia to UNESCO and
- several nationally registered Non-Governmental Organisations, such as Phare Ponleu Selpak, Bophana Audiovisual Resources Center, and Cambodian Living Arts. The first, Phare Ponleu Selpak, is a Cambodian non-profit arts school located in Battambang, offering support to children, youth and the surrounding communities through artistic, educational, social and community outreach, and engagement programmes. The second, Bophana Audiovisual Resources Center, instead aims at restoring and enhancing the Cambodian audio-visual memory with archives, production, and screening activities. The third and last organization, Cambodian Living Arts, started its engagement with a focus on endangered performing arts and rituals, but further evolved into helping people to build and develop careers in the arts through scholarships, fellowships, and performance opportunities. Even if not directly involved in

the implementation of their activities, the Cambodian NatCom is often supportive of these organisations, especially in the phase of proposal submission, and thrives in playing a facilitating role between those and other institutions, so that they may be able to receive financial support and advance in their goals. One example could be drawn from the context of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, where proposals were sent to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris for evaluation and consideration, accompanied by an introductory letter by the Cambodian NatCom.

On the other side, projecting its coordinating role to include international partners, the Cambodian NatCom is proud to engage in the implementation of programmes of national and international relevance with multiple international actors. Among others, the Cambodian NatCom has privileged relationships in particular with:

- the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris;
- the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh;
- the UNESCO Office in Bangkok;
- the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Protection of the Archaeological Site of Angkor (ICC-Angkor), under the co-presidency of France and Japan;
- the ICC-Preah Vihear, whose co-presidency is entrusted to China and India;
- the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO;
- The National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan. As an example, in the context of this partnership, the Cambodian NatCom, thanks to the project management of Mr Eang Yos, organised an art competition addressed to 1,800 children from six Municipalities and Provinces known as **the “2019-2020 Mitsubishi Asian Children’s Enikki Festa”**; and
- the Cultural Heritage Protection Cooperation Office, Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU Nara). ACCU Nara aims to contribute to the human resources development for cultural heritage protection in the Asia-Pacific region. Every year, the Cambodian NatCom supports the selection process of suitable candidates from relevant institutions to join the training programmes in Nara to exchange experiences and know-how in the field of conservation at the regional level.

CHALLENGES TO CURRENT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

As it is the case for many other institutions, in order to ensure the smooth running of its activities, the Cambodian NatCom relies on the human resources that are put at its disposal according to its own budget availability. The work of the National Commission is carried on by personnel composed of, on one hand, administrative staff and personnel whose technical competences provide support to the work of the other colleagues – such as IT, archive management, etc. - and, on the other hand, by staff in charge to deal with programme conceptualisation and implementation, stakeholder coordination, and so on.

To increase its participation in joint programmes with its partners and in order to be able to broaden its internal capacities to deliver activities, the Cambodian NatCom would benefit from the addition of supplementary English/French speaking qualified human resources coming from different backgrounds, so that all fields of competence of UNESCO may be covered. In this way, the Cambodian NatCom could not only fulfil its role of coordinator of the national activities under the umbrella of UNESCO, but also step up in the building of internal capacities as a knowledge centre. This would allow it to become a source of guidance and advice, actively participating in the implementation phase of many projects while not neglecting its liaison office role.

Moreover, considering the relevance and the amount of its contributions, added budget and increased technical support may be beneficial in supervising and further strengthening the regular cooperation and coordination of the National Commission with the numerous Ministries touched upon by UNESCO's programmes.

These improvements would help in moving forward to achieve all the objectives under its competence that the direction of the Cambodian NatCom has articulated for the future of the educational and cultural sectors of the country.

3. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF THE CAMBODIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

FUTURE COMMON CHALLENGES IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

2020 has been a globally challenging year. The outbreak of the COVID-19 resulted not only in a public health crisis of global proportions, but also an economic and social crisis, an education crisis, and information crisis and many others. Reflection on the current state shows common challenges appearing for the countries of Asia and the Pacific, which, unfortunately, often mirror those experienced at the global level.

ENSURING EDUCATION FOR ALL

According to UNESCO's *Global Monitor of School Closures caused by COVID-19*, at the height of the pandemic at the end of April 2020, 1,563,992,622 learners were affected around the globe by the impossibility to attend class at school. This figure equals 89.3% of all enrolled learners in 183 different countries.

In East Asia and the Pacific alone, 325 million children missed school in the first two months of the pandemic. In Cambodia, the decision of MoEYS caused all schools to be closed on the 16th of March 2020 to support the efforts to avoid the spread of the virus. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, national access to primary education was successfully improved to reach enrolment rates pointing at over 95%. However, for lower secondary education, enrolment levels and completion of basic education scored lower. This was exacerbated by repetitions and drop-out rates that remain a persistent challenge for the RGC, and which are considered to be linked to interconnected issues such as uneven access to schooling, informal costs for families, limited opportunities for employment after secondary and tertiary education, lack of vocational training, and so on. These problems are reinforced in the challenging global framework of 2020.

In this regional context, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented an

unprecedented risk to children's education, protection and wellbeing, and in particular for those more in need and for the 35 million who do not already attend school. Due to poverty, marginalisation, difficulty in being reached by educational programmes, and issues related to the protracted economic shock caused by the distressing global situation, some of these children may not be able to return to school even when the circumstances ease. It is likely that the longer children stay out of school, the less probable it is that they will return to it. These risks are particularly evident for girls and young women, learners with disabilities, ethnic minorities, migrant learners, and other vulnerable groups.

Any gains made in the advancement of education attained in recent years are at risk of being wiped out. The education of a whole generation is at stake. Schools do much more than teaching children how to read, write, and count. They provide nutrition, health and hygiene services, provide mental health and psychosocial support and dramatically help to reduce the risk of violence, teenage pregnancy, and child marriage.

The pandemic does not only affect the educational path of children, but has also put a halt to access to literacy programmes by adults of vulnerable trunks of society, which are already facing serious difficulties due to the spreading inability to work under these circumstances. In Cambodia, before 2020, the UNESCO-sponsored Factory Literacy Programme addressed young working women in particular, and was structured to enable them to acquire fundamental, basic literacy and math skills. Empowering those women meant to give them a chance to realise their full potential, not only improving their daily work environment, along with their productivity and competitiveness, but also allowing them to better engage in society and in their communities through critical thinking and life skills. However, the impact of the pandemic affected the ability of factories to continue working, and therefore the development of the literacy programme.

It is fundamental that UNESCO and its connected agencies keep supporting the governments around the world in their efforts to mitigate not only the immediate impact of school closures, but also to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning. It also needs to be taken into account that, as of 2017,

across Asia and the Pacific only 55% of people had access to internet, which means that remote learning requires conjunctural mass-scale responses to make it possible.

As 2020 enters in its fourth trimester, across the region, while keeping in mind the health of their citizens, policy-makers are starting to lift school closures. In collaboration with the relevant Ministries, UNESCO and its affiliated bodies, among which the National Commissions play a key role for policy coordination, measures are put in place to assist in this process, such as staged re-openings with precise health-protective procedures, clear physical distancing and personal hygiene measures, and adapted personnel and attendance regulations. Clear guidance would smooth the transition from remote learning to face-to-face learning, in particular safeguarding vulnerable students and staff from the risks of infection. This is as true for Cambodia as it is for any other country of the region and beyond. Education must be put at the very core of the response to COVID-19 so that the goal to “Build Back Better” is inclusive and allows more equitable societies to be achieved.

The use of new learning modalities experimented with during the crisis, equipping teachers with new skills, creating more equal learning environments, and focusing on those children who are most likely not to return to school: all these are opportunities that this pandemic opens up for governments. Every stakeholder must remain fully aware and focused on the fact that the destiny of the fundamental human right to education and future of hundreds of millions of learners will be shaped by how countries deal with this crisis. The welfare of societies depends on inclusive and quality education, reduced inequalities, improved learning outcomes, and increased social cohesion.

REVIVING THE CULTURE AND TOURISM SECTORS

Culture is what keeps societies together, and the pandemic strongly argues for that. In moments of despair, people are drawn toward culture to feel the proximity of others in the community, to be lifted out of the sense of being left alone, to experience comfort, togetherness, and hope while physically unable to

gather and share the everyday.

Despite these considerations, the cultural sector suffered a strong negative impact from the outbreak of COVID-19. The shock caused by the pandemic on the tourism sector had a major effect on the region given the high level of its importance both as contributor to GDP and fundamental source of incomes and jobs.

Tourism is an important source of earnings for many countries, and the impact of experiencing a sudden fall in demand has deep economic and social repercussions that go beyond the tourism sector. The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reported that, as of end of January 2020, when the epidemic of COVID-19 was starting to reach its pandemic status, 96% of all worldwide touristic destinations introduced full or partial restrictions that limited their access to tourists.

As in the rest of the world, the tourism sector in Asia and the Pacific has been hit hard. It is reported that international arrivals fell by over 90% in many countries compared to 2019. This panorama is likely to persist. In fact, the UN World Tourism Organization predicts a drop of up to 80% of international arrivals over the whole year. Moreover, an International Air Transport Association survey that was conducted in June 2020 highlights that half of respondents are likely to wait six months or more before traveling again. It is to be considered that, for example in 2018, the Asia-Pacific region as a whole recorded 348 million tourist arrivals, which accounts for USD 442 billion of tourism receipts and 5% of total exports.

Tourism is an industry that is key to the economic development of Southeast Asia, contributing about 12.1% of the region's GDP in 2019 and 13.3% of employment. In particular, the economies in the region that rely the most on the tourism sector are among those that will be likely to experience the largest negative impact in terms of economic growth. As it is, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam are the ones with the highest share of employment in tourism, accounting for 6.7, 9.0 and 6.9 per cent, respectively.

Because of the importance of tourism in the region, it is foreseen that the Asia-Pacific region may lose approximately 63 million jobs and \$1 trillion in GDP because of international tourism dropping by up to 80% this year compared to 2019. This would have negative consequences on the 10-year period of sustained growth that the region as a whole was experiencing. Moreover, in the long term, these financial difficulties linked to unemployment may lead to an increase in immigration-related issues.

On top of these considerations, it is to be taken into account that, in many countries of Asia and the Pacific, more than three in four tourism workers are in informal jobs, which makes them particularly vulnerable to the economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Informal sector jobs often lack basic protections, including social protection coverage. Remote work by workers in hospitality, airlines or other related industries is impeded by the nature of their work itself, and these workers therefore have a higher risk of being left jobless. For Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam together, the International Labour Organisation estimates that the jobs of at least 15.3 million tourism workers – 6.4 million women and 8.9 million men – will be negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

In the same context, the International Council on Museums (ICOM) estimated that 60,000 institutions, which correspond to 95% of museums worldwide, were ordered to close at the peak of the pandemic. In Cambodia, although the three World Heritages Sites - Angkor, Preah Vihear, and Sambor Prei Kuk - were kept open to visitors, other cultural and tourism institutions, such as museums, the Royal Palace, cinemas and theatres, closed their doors and stopped receiving visitors from the 18th of March until the month of June 2020. According to the Ministry of Tourism, at the beginning of April 2020, almost half of the 630,000 workers in the Cambodian tourism sector lost their jobs. This loss can be equally perceived in the sale of tickets at the Angkor Archaeological Park in the first nine months of 2020. In this context, Cambodia saw a 75% decrease compared to the same period last year, earning USD 18.45 million in revenues. In September 2020 alone, the sale of tickets amounted to just USD 124,296 over a total of

2,958 foreign tourists registered, which corresponds to a drop of about 97.45%.

The temporary closures of cultural institutions, archaeological sites, and heritage sites have also raised concerns about reports of augmented insecurity for cultural property and sites. Countries in the region and beyond must remain vigilant and cooperate to curb this risk.

COMBATting THE “DISINFODEMIC”

From disinformation about the correct use of disinfectants to combat the spread of the virus, to false claims that it can travel through radio waves and mobile networks, un-checked, misleading, and distorted information is downplaying the global effort to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. While the COVID-19 outbreak is a global public health crisis, a parallel pandemic of disinformation – a disinfodemic – is impacting people globally. Falsehood spreads confusion like a virus, and this virus does not appear to stop. In this difficult environment, UNESCO and its national partners are working hard to dispel rumours, fake news, and messages of hate and division, by supporting the diffusion of accurate information and messages of hope and solidarity. In fact, the UN agencies around the world are currently asking people to use extra care before sharing news, and to commit to reliable sources of information.

In the current global crisis, media workers are as vital as other essential professionals. Punctual and verified news, data journalism, and fact-checked and investigative reporting contribute to save lives, while disinformation increases fear and its consequent chain of bad decisions. In fulfilling their role, journalists around the world have an increased responsibility to counter the spread of this disinfodemic. As the health crisis is fuelling other viruses of fake news, mistrust and disinformation, it is crucial that journalists are supported in the performance of their tasks to serve the cause of reliable and credible information to the advantage of the public.

Another issue that appears on the rise from the COVID-19 disinfodemic is the

stigmatisation of certain nationalities and social groups. To address this, powerful messages of anti-discrimination and solidarity are needed to promote cohesion in the fight against the virus.

Last but not least, this global crisis has shown the world the importance of joining minds, hearts, and hands to fight against a threat that does not differentiate between groups. In this context, advocacy for the reinforcement of the connection between science and policy making, and for the opening of science to societies in contraposition to the closure of borders, is needed. Making scientific evidence available to all through a variety of initiatives, including knowledge sharing, is fundamental, especially in the context of mutual support between Developed and Least Developed Countries. Efforts need to be spent on mobilising support for scientific research in order to shrink the knowledge gap among countries, while ensuring that decision-makers have access to appropriate scientific data and research findings.

PROPOSALS/SUGGESTIONS FOR JOINT PROJECTS

As from any crisis, opportunities also arise. This is a moment of reflection, a time for open and honest discussion among every actor involved in education, social and human sciences, information, culture, and natural sciences. From this crisis, UNESCO and its partners, both national and global, can seize the opportunity to highlight the fundamental value of their work and go on to come back stronger internally and on the international scene.

COOPERATION

This project initiated by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO shows how important it is that National Commissions are well aware of their past, their present, but also of their future so that they can know what path has been already walked and in which direction the way is now open. In addition, it raises the matter of not only recognising our own individual voice, but also that we join it to the other voices in the region.

Information is at the core of all cooperation. To fulfil their missions, regional NatComs now have the occasion to build solid mechanisms with the objective to share information among them. Regular connections would facilitate the task of bringing visibility to UNESCO's activities in general, and in particular to those that are implemented in the region. In this way, not only other NatComs will be able to remain updated with the evolving environment around them, but they will also be empowered to take example or to merge forces for the common good. This approach would focus on the pragmatic advancement of the fields under their responsibility by pooling fundamental resources for reaching goals both at national and regional level. The ultimate result would be that the regional NatComs gain strength in their everyday activities by being surrounded by supportive partners and informative systems, but that they also gain weight on the regional scene through visibility.

The Cambodian NatCom suggests that recurrent communication and exchanges of information be given priority for future cooperation among NatComs of the region. Next year may be the right moment to:

- consolidate a shared digital database of the publications of the participating NatComs, while initiating a regional cooperative Newsletter that informs on the past, ongoing and scheduled projects involving NatComs. This tool could also offer updates on the focus chosen by each country according to their national priorities and contextualised to the strategy adopted by UNESCO as a global institution.

EDUCATION

The COVID-19 crisis has shown us that the focus needs to be put on education for youth empowerment and on vocational training for more stable and reliable employment. Every activity suggested under this light will bear fruit in the future to make our societies more resilient and more equitable, where education is the drive for improvement.

In particular, for next year the Cambodian NatCom would like to propose that the participating NatComs join their efforts and capabilities for:

- organising a project involving school children on a drawing competition. The subject may be the World Heritage Sites of their own country, with teachers providing knowledge and insights on them. Selected schools of **each participating country would then be “twinned”** with a selected school of the other countries. This means that every school will be paired with a number of schools equalling the number of the participating countries. For example, each of the 10 selected Cambodian schools would be put in contact with one school per participating country, for a result of 1 Cambodian school having 1 partner school from 10 different countries. These schools would then exchange their drawings with one another, and eventually learn about the cultural heritage of the other countries along with their own.

In a similar vein, another interesting project option would be the following:

- In order to initiate youngsters to culture, for example in the context of the best performing students of the University of Fine Arts, and to encourage them to keep pursuing a career in the sector, a learning exchange could be organised. Selected students from the participating countries could prepare a dossier highlighting the nexus between development and culture in their country, and then present it to the other selected students of the region. If the global health situation will allow it, this group of regional students could meet and have the opportunity to visit the World Heritage Sites of each participating country. This would give the chance to engage and exchange, learn from each other, and experience different *modus operandi* in the protection of cultural heritage in connection with sustainable development.

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NatCom staff and office



Painting activities for children

Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO

Dr. Yaya JAKARIA



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FOREWORD

Bismillahirrahmaanirrahiim

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was formed on November 16, 1945 with the aim of creating peace through the formation of dialogue between cultures and communities based on shared values. As stated in the UNESCO constitution, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed". Through this vision, UNESCO has formed a global vision of sustainable development which seeks to protect human rights, increase mutual respect and eradicate poverty, all of which are the main objectives of UNESCO's mission and activities.

The Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO (INCU), under the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), functions as a bridge between the UNESCO programme and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and vice versa. INCU, in carrying out its programmes, is involved with UNESCO activities, agencies, institutions, organizations and individuals working for the advancement of education, science, culture, and communication and information for the achievement of sustainable development. INCU works together with the government and non-governmental organizations in Indonesia to encourage participation and disseminate information about the objectives of UNESCO's programmes and activities.

The Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) is one of the national commissions that actively encourages cooperation among national commissions in several fields. Looking at the history of the formation of national commissions in the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Korea, INCU believes that KNCU is an important partner that always provides support to other national **commissions in their efforts to achieve UNESCO's objectives.**

The Joint Project proposed by KNCU is expected to increase UNESCO's visibility

and mutual understanding among various stakeholders in the region through an analysis of the identity and characteristics of selected national commissions, to identify and develop joint projects among national commissions to address future common challenges, and to strengthen cooperation among national commissions to achieve UNESCO's goal of promoting solidarity and a culture of peace in the region.

INCU greatly appreciates this joint project and also expresses its highest respect to KNCU for the opportunity given to participate in this project. Therefore, as the Executive Chairman of INCU, I hope that this Joint Project will be a success and that it will provide tremendous benefits for all participants.

In conclusion, I hope that the well-established cooperation between these national commissions will continue to be improved for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national, regional and global levels.

Wassalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Prof. Dr. Arief Rachman, M.Pd
Executive Chairman
Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO

PROFILE OF INDONESIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO (INCU), since its establishment in 1952, has operated under the Ministry of Education and Culture. The main **focus of INCU's responsibility and authority in relation to UNESCO's programmes** and activities is in the education and cultural sectors.

The Secretariat undertakes the coordination and administrative tasks of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO, which is ex-officio chaired by the Minister of Education and Culture and is managed daily by the Executive Chairman / Secretary-General / Executive Director, with the support of the office and secretariat. The organizational structure of the National Commission is driven by the involvement of government agencies through representatives who **sit in INCU's Plenary Session chaired by the Minister of Education and Culture**. Currently, there are 30 government agencies implementing UNESCO-related programmes. The Secretary-General is assisted by an executive body consisting of representatives from government institutions and experts in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication and information.

The number of staff at the INCU secretariat consists of:

2 (two) National Coordinators; a National Coordinator for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and a National Coordinator of ASPnet; and 13 personnel supporting 4 (four) sectors of UNESCO (Education, Culture, Science, Communication and Information)

The forerunner to the formation of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO (INCU) had its legal basis in the form of Decree number 37978 of the Minister of Education and Culture number in 1952 concerning the National Committee for UNESCO. A further Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture (number 14827 / S / 56) was issued in 1956 concerning the Indonesian National Institution for UNESCO. In line with the increasing development of cooperation with UNESCO, the Indonesian National Institute for UNESCO was

restructured and changed its name based on Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture number 0257/0/1977 of 1977 concerning the Dismissal of the Indonesian National Institution for UNESCO and the Establishment of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO. Finally, in 1984 Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture number 0153/0/1984 was issued concerning the formation, details of tasks and work procedures of the Plenary Commission, Daily Commission, and Secretariat of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO.

The INCU budget structure is supported by the Bureau of Cooperation and Public Relations, in the Secretariat General of the Ministry of Education and Culture, with the annual amount around IDR 6 billion, the equivalent of around USD 420,000.

1. PAST: CHRONOLOGY OF THE INDONESIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION

HISTORY OF INDONESIA IN UNESCO

The history of Indonesia's membership of UNESCO began when the Government of the Republic of Indonesia submitted an application to become a member of UNESCO on 8 January 1950. On 10 January 1950 the application was submitted **to the members of UNESCO's Executive Board and the Secretary-General** of the United Nations by the Director-General of UNESCO. This was done because at that time Indonesia was not yet a member of the United Nations, so the consent **of the UN Economic and Social Council was required before Indonesia's** application to a UNESCO could be considered. On 8 February 1950 a resolution of the UN Economic and Social Council expressed no objection, so on 17 February 1950 the application was discussed in the 19th session of the UNESCO Executive Board and the discussion process was also carried out at the 10th session of the UN Economic and Social Council. On 25 May 1950, the 5th session of the UNESCO General Conference in Florence, Italy, decided to accept Indonesia as a UNESCO member and Indonesia officially became a member on 27 May 1950. Later that

year, on 28 September 28 1950, Indonesia also officially became a member of the United Nations.

Indonesia's membership of UNESCO is inseparable from its pursuit of a free and active foreign policy and the view that multilateralism has become the basis for Indonesia in developing global cooperation. Indonesia's membership of UNESCO is connected to the mandate stated in Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution concerning education and culture. Since becoming a member of UNESCO, Indonesia has tried to take an active role in UNESCO in accordance with **Indonesia's national interests and goals. UNESCO's role as a specialized UN agency** is seen to be in line with these national interests, particularly in creating world peace and advancing the public interest through development and cooperation in education, science, culture, as well as communication and information.

The main reason Indonesia submitted an application to become a member of UNESCO was because it wanted to use the best methods to eradicate illiteracy and use the results of modern research for the eradication of malaria. **The country's application letter to become a member of UNESCO was submitted by the Prime Minister of Indonesia (at that time not yet the President) and the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia, which reflects the strategic importance that Indonesia's government placed on becoming a member of the UN's specialized agency in the fields of education, natural and social science, and culture.** In the following two years, namely 1951 and 1952, the division of **UNESCO's fields of activity became relatively fixed, with the addition of communication.** The history of Indonesia at UNESCO can be traced through its activities in these fields. UNESCO has a huge variety of projects and Indonesia focuses on some of these projects. However, the most important division of activities remains the main areas of activity, namely: education, natural and social sciences, culture, and communication and information.

Currently UNESCO has 193 Member States and 11 Associate Members. Its Executive Board is made up of 58 Member States, elected for 4 year terms. During its membership of UNESCO, Indonesia has been a member of the

Executive Board eight times (1954-1958, 1958-1962, 1976-1980, 1985-1989, 1995-1999, 2003-2007, 2011-2015, 2017-2021). Indonesia's current position on the UNESCO Executive Board is expected to contribute to the direction of education, science, culture and information communication policies. There are several Indonesian programmes and initiatives that have become successful examples for UNESCO, one of which is the stipulation of a 20 percent education fund in the law, policies and restoration programmes relating to Borobudur Temple, which has since been used in similar programmes for other countries. Indonesia's presence in UNESCO also aims to help the country take advantage of intellectual developments in the international world for the benefit of the nation and state.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO IN INDONESIA

The juridical basis regarding the importance and necessity of Indonesia having a National Commission for UNESCO is the agreement between Indonesia and UNESCO contained in Article VII of the UNESCO Constitution and Article IV of the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO. The framework contained in Article VII of the UNESCO Constitution stipulates that each Member State must take measures with the aim of linking its main bodies related to educational, scientific and cultural issues with UNESCO. The National Commission established to accomplish this helps to connect Indonesia's presence within UNESCO and the implementation of UNESCO programmes in Indonesia so as to facilitate understanding of UNESCO's programmes, expand the reach of relevant **stakeholders, and involve Indonesia's intellectual and scientific communities and civil society organizations in UNESCO's work. The UNESCO General Conference** on various occasions and in particular at its 19th session (1976), has emphasized the need to link Member States through their respective National Commissions with the formulation, implementation and evaluation of UNESCO programmes, has recommended that the functions of National Commissions be strengthened as advisors, liaison and executive bodies, and has encouraged the implementation of cooperation between National Commissions at the sub regional, regional and inter-regional levels.

Article IV of the Charter of the National Commission for UNESCO also emphasizes the responsibilities of Member States to the National Commission in terms of providing the status, structure and resources required. The National Commission itself will represent other departments, ministries, services and agencies, with members who must be sufficiently senior, competent and capable of contributing to UNESCO. National Commissions may have an executive body, committee bodies, coordinating bodies and other bodies, as appropriate. In order to be effective, the National Commission should have: (1) a legal status consistent with Article VII of the UNESCO Constitution and the provisions of the Charter which clearly define the responsibilities vested in the National Commission, its membership, the conditions governing operations, and resources; (2) a permanent secretariat, equipped with: (a) high-level staff, whose status, especially that of the Secretary-General, must be clearly defined and who should be appointed for a long period in order to ensure the necessary continuity of experience; (b) sufficient powers and financial means to enable it to carry out their functions efficiently and to increase **its participation in UNESCO's activities**.

Efforts to fulfill these requirements in terms of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO are reflected in various decrees of the Minister of Education, Teaching and Culture as well as the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture. Decree of the Minister of Education, Teaching and Culture Number 37978 / Kab. of 1952, established the National Committee for UNESCO. The task of the National Committee was to work as a liaison body between UNESCO and the Indonesian people in the education, science and culture sectors, and to act as an advisory body to the Government of Indonesia in all matters relating to UNESCO. The committee represented 15 government agencies, plus 30 well-known and influential people in the fields of education, knowledge and culture. In addition, an Executive Committee was also formed to lead all efforts of the National Committee and oversee secretariat duties. This Ministerial Decree was renewed by the Decree of the Minister of Education, Teaching and Culture Number 14827 / S / 56 of 1957 which changed the name of the Indonesian National Committee for UNESCO to the Indonesian National Institution for UNESCO, while the Executive Committee was changed to the Working Body.

In 1977 a Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 0257 / P / 1977 stipulated the dissolution of the Indonesian National Committee for UNESCO and establishment of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO (INCU) as a non-structural forum for coordination, synchronization and integration of the formulation of the Government's public policies which concern UNESCO programmes and activities. The decree stipulated that INCU would be led by the Minister of Education and Culture and that it would be responsible to the President. To support the mechanism and work procedures of the INCU, a Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 0153/0/1984 was issued **in 1984, regulating the formation, job details and work procedures of INCU's** Plenary Commission, Daily Commission, and Secretariat.

The provisions regarding the existence of the National Commission as outlined in various Ministerial Decrees do not address all the functions and participation as demanded by the UNESCO Charter concerning the National Commission, or all the interests of various institutions involved in UNESCO programmes / activities in Indonesia so that the role of the National Commission liaising between the interests of Indonesia and UNESCO can be carried out smoothly, effectively, efficiently, accountably and transparently. The current role of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO is broader and stronger and demands diplomacy and working relations skills based on expertise.

INCU's programmes and activities are focused on the education (in particular literacy, education for all, early childhood education, sustainable development education, vocational education, and higher education) and cultural sectors, but also on science, and communication & information. Therefore, the position of the National Commission within the Ministry of Education and Culture needs to be strengthened by involving and empowering experts in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication and information as well as representatives of related government agencies. The leadership of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO should remain with the Ministry of Education and Culture, involving the participation of other relevant government agencies and expert groups. The National Commission should still report to the President. The authority of each government agency should remain unchanged, but in relation

to UNESCO programmes there needs to be an improvement in coordination, synchronization and integration through the National Commission for UNESCO, led by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

2. PRESENT: MAIN PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE INDONESIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

In carrying out its duties and functions, the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO coordinates and collaborates with ministries and institutions in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. As has been noted above, the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO is engaged in achieving its goals for the four main areas of UNESCO, namely education, culture, natural and social sciences, and communication and information.

Some of the programmes that are the focus of INCU are as follows:

1. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial development. Quality education and learning for sustainable development at all levels and in society are urgently needed. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an effort to encourage people to be constructive and creative in facing global challenges and creating resilient and sustainable societies.

Education for sustainable development enables every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. Education for sustainable development incorporates key issues of sustainable development into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption.

Opportunities that must be exploited to implement ESD include:

- (a) Redirecting education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development.
- (b) Strengthening education and learning across all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development.
- (c) Giving academics the opportunity to work with colleagues from other disciplines to develop new, innovative approaches to teaching and to develop new collaborative research projects in previously unexplored partnerships.

2. Lifelong learning

In order to be innovative and inclusive, learning processes and educational strategies must recognize all places where learning takes place, such as in the workplace, in the community, in the family, and in social and community life. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has expanded opportunities for people to obtain information, interact, identify issues of common concern, generate income, and participate in society. However, there is a risk that advanced technology could lead to the exclusivity of large numbers of people from the new global communications system. With this background, UNESCO through its Lifelong Learning programme strives to enable all people around the world to be able to exploit the great potential of ICT for learning and self-empowerment.

Implementation of the Lifelong Learning programme is achieved through the implementation of the following 6 sub-programmes: Literacy; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); Higher Education; Open and Distance Learning; ICT Applications for Non-Formal Education; and 21st Century Skills. UNESCO established the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), which is located in Hamburg, Germany, as an institution and organizational unit within the United Nations that holds the global mandate for the Lifelong Learning programme. Through a holistic and integrated approach, UIL promotes and supports lifelong learning with a focus on adult learning, non-stop education, literacy and non-formal basic education. Lifelong Learning activities emphasize

equitable education for disadvantaged groups and in conflict countries.

UNESCO's standard setting on lifelong learning has been adapted and inspired various educational policies in Indonesia, including Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2016 concerning Vocational Revitalization, as well as Early Childhood Education programmes, Curriculum 2013, the National Literacy Movement, and Strengthening Character Education, which are implemented throughout Indonesia.

3. UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp)

At the 38th UNESCO General Conference in Paris on 17 November 2015, the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) and UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) were merged into a new Programme, i.e. International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP). A worldwide network, the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) were also created. UNESCO developed the UNESCO Global Geoparks Operational Guidelines in UNESCO's 38C/14 Document, which is used by the Indonesian National Geopark Committee (KNGI) as the standard reference document for the action plan for the geopark programme in Indonesia.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.³ UNESCO developed the geopark concept, which has been recognized worldwide as the best concept at present in terms of sustainable use of geological resources. Currently there are 161 Global Geoparks spread across 44 countries, including Indonesia.

The UNESCO Global Geoparks programme has brought Indonesia the following benefits, among others. Indonesian Geoparks can be promoted internationally. The designation of National Geoparks as UNESCO Global Geoparks has become a new icon for Indonesian tourism based on community and conservation and can

³ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/unesco-global-geoparks/>

attract more foreign tourists to visit.

The GGN, to which all UNESCO Global Geoparks belong, provides a network for cooperation and exchanges related to geological heritage issues among experts and practitioners from all countries in the GGN. It also offers geopark stakeholders to discuss shared values, interests, and methodologies for geopark management through International Conferences on UNESCO Global Geoparks which are held every 2 (two) years.

Indonesia has 5 (five) UNESCO Global Geoparks, namely the Batur Geopark (2012), the Gunung Sewu Geopark (2015), the Ciletuh-Palabuhan Ratu Geopark (2018), the Rinjani Geopark (2018) and the Toba Caldera Geopark (2020). Indonesia's active involvement in the GGN is beneficial in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme

Indonesia has been part of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) for MOST since 2001. MOST focuses on social transformations and coordinates with the government, the social humanitarian community, and civil society to improve the relationship between knowledge and action as one of the keys to positive social change. The MOST work programme focuses on social inclusion and social protection with the aim of promoting sustainable sciences to the government and society, encouraging research based on empirical findings as the basis for national policies in the context of social protection and disaster risk reduction in Indonesian coastal communities, and encouraging policy transformation towards a community that is inclusive in Indonesia. The social changes that have developed in Indonesia since reformation, democratization, and radicalism have not only led to the development of horizontal conflicts between communities but have also threatened the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia. MOST supports Member States in enhancing the policy-making process through policy-focused research on human needs to promote a culture of evidence-based and informed decision-making. MOST has a very important and strategic role in helping Indonesia create the inclusive community conditions conducive to building a

great nation.

5. Protection of Indonesia's Intangible Cultural Heritage

By ratifying the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2007, Indonesia has strengthened its position as a cultural superpower with extraordinary cultural diversity, and has also obtained a number of potential special benefits which, if utilized optimally, can contribute significantly to national development and community welfare, including among others:

1. Strengthening the brand image of cultural products, which is expected to have an impact on:
 - (a) increased sales potential of cultural products and services;
 - (b) increased tourism to areas that produce cultural products and provide services related to cultural products;
 - (c) protection of recognition from other countries (related to national identity);
 - (d) increasing national unity;
 - (e) strengthening educational development that supports the culture-based creative industry (SMK pendalangan, etc.);
2. access to international sources of funding and
3. access to various information related to knowledge and training to increase resource capacity to maintain Indonesia's traditional intangible cultural heritage.

With the inclusion of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (RL-ICH), Indonesia has access, for these cultural items, to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund (ICHF), a UNESCO source of funding specifically dedicated to the 2003 Convention. Since 2002, ICHF has invested US \$25,349,514 in funding 148 projects in 108 developing countries. Indonesia itself has taken advantage of this opportunity to invest a total of US\$149,986 in a project to implement the National Action Plan for the Protection of Indonesian Wayang Performances from January 2005 to December 2007.

Until now, Indonesia has successfully registered ten items of Intangible Cultural Heritage on the lists, namely: (1) Keris, which was registered in 2008 in the Representative List; (2) Wayang, which was registered in 2008 in the Representative List; (3) Batik, which was registered in 2009, in the Representative List; (4) Education and training for Batik Pekalongan, which was registered in 2009 in the Best Practices list; (5) Angklung, which was registered in 2010 in the Representative List; (6) Saman Dance, which was registered in 2011 in the Urgent Safeguarding list; (7) Noken, which was registered in 2012 in the Urgent Safeguarding list; (8) Balinese traditional dance, which was registered in 2015 in the Representative List; (9) Pinisi, the art of shipbuilding in South Sulawesi, which was registered in 2017 on the Representative List, and (10) the Traditions of Pencak Silat, registered on December 12, 2019 in the Representative List.

Two further items of Indonesian intangible cultural heritage have been officially nominated for inclusion on the RL-ICH, namely Pantun (along with Malaysia) and Gamelan, with the target of having Pantun officially inscribed in 2020, and Gamelan in 2021. At the national level, a List of Indonesian Intangible Cultural Heritage has been established, and serious consideration is being given to which further items should be nominated for inscription on the RL-ICH.

6. Protection and Promotion of Indonesian Cultural Diversity

Indonesia also ratified the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2012, with the aim of further strengthening Indonesia's position as a cultural superpower, by prioritizing the active role of the Government in developing cultural-based national policies and measures, and to obtain the following benefits:

1. better coordination among stakeholders in the field of culture, especially between government institutions and between the government and civil society organizations and private companies;
2. access to international sources of funding; and

3. **access to information, knowledge and training to increase Indonesia's** capacity in developing cultural policies that support the protection, development and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.

As a member country of the 2005 Convention, Indonesia has access to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), a UNESCO source of funding specifically dedicated to the 2005 Convention. Since 2010, IFCD has invested US \$ 7,520,089 in funding 98 projects in 51 developing countries.

Challenges in Programme Implementation

INCU carries out a range of programmes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, as can be seen from the above information. Current challenges in implementing these programmes include:

1. Communication difficulties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic because communication can only be done online;
2. Adjustments made to the state budget to tackle the pandemic, which have had a negative effect on programme implementation;
3. A need for reinforcement in terms of binding policies as a form of encouragement to fulfil programme implementation obligations;
4. A need to strengthen cooperation between the national commission and the central and local governments, government and private institutions, to explore better international cooperation, and so on.

3. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF INCU

The global COVID-19 pandemic that has occurred in 2020 has provided a lesson for all countries about the difficulties a pandemic can bring. Almost all countries failed to predict the impact that would be caused by the pandemic. All educational, economic, religious, cultural activities have been significantly affected. Almost all countries have put border controls/quarantine provisions in place to protect themselves from widespread transmission of the COVID-19 through visits by tourists or business partners from other countries. However,

behind this impact, the presence of digitalization and internet innovations has allowed economic creativity and educational services during the pandemic. Many online business innovations have sprung up and online businesses have mostly been able to survive during the pandemic. Education systems are being changed to maximize remote learning.

There are still tremendous challenges ahead during the COVID-19 pandemic, for all countries and national commissions for UNESCO. In the face of the COVID-19 storm, it is not the time for countries to adopt isolationism, protectionism, and nationalism. Rather, every country must support and embrace regionalism and multilateralism by constructively and genuinely working together to achieve common goals. Facing an unprecedented economic downturn and a sharp expected increase in poverty, governments have eventually started to design and implement different forms of mitigation measures.

Why focus on ESD?

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations. ESD aims at developing competencies that empower individuals to reflect on their own actions, taking into account their current and future social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts, from a local and a global perspective. Individuals should also be empowered to act in complex situations in a sustainable manner, which may require them to strike out in new directions; and to participate in socio-political processes, moving their societies towards sustainable development.

ESD is holistic and transformational education that addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy, and the learning environment. Thus, ESD does not only integrate content such as climate change, poverty and sustainable consumption into the curriculum; it also creates interactive, learner-centered teaching and learning settings. What ESD requires is a shift from teaching to learning. It asks for an action-oriented, transformative pedagogy, which supports self-directed learning, participation and collaboration, problem-orientation, inter-

and transdisciplinary and the linking of formal and informal learning.

ESD is explicitly recognized in the SDGs as part of Target 4.7 of the SDG on education, together with Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which UNESCO promotes as a complementary approach. At the same time, it is important to **emphasize ESD's crucial importance for all** the other 16 SDGs. With its overall aim to develop cross-cutting sustainability competencies in learners, ESD is an essential contribution to all efforts to achieve the SDGs, enabling individuals to contribute to sustainable development by promoting societal, economic and political change as well as by transforming their own behavior. ESD can produce specific cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral learning outcomes that enable individuals to deal with the particular challenges of each SDG, thus facilitating its achievement. In short, ESD enables all individuals to contribute to achieving the SDGs by equipping them with the knowledge and competencies they need, not only to understand what the SDGs are about, but to engage as informed citizens in bringing about the necessary transformation.

ESD is a tool to envision a better future, to reflect on the COVID-19 impacts on education and on the SDGs, and to exchange and learn from good practices. It has become essential to rethink societies, to emphasize quality education and scientific research, and to be creative and innovative in our educational practices and methods.

What we need right now is education on how to be human, how to connect to each other, and how to deal with pandemics. Such a reality is a driving force to rewrite the 2030 Agenda. The disruption created by COVID-19 provides an opportunity to expand our notion of learning beyond the traditional approach, and to invest and innovate in participatory and creative educational initiatives and tools.

ESD addresses the content of education so that curricula include learning about environmental integrity, economic viability and how to work towards a just society. But it also reassesses education methods and outcomes to form critically minded, empathetic students who can work together to solve problems and act

on local and global emergencies.

As a result, INCU believes that ESD is the key enabler to solving the problems of life during the pandemic and afterwards. INCU proposes the following two ideas for a joint project among national commissions that is based on ESD and is possible to implement during a pandemic:

The role of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in promoting heritage in East and Southeast Asia, in order to support heritage preservation and

The role of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in encouraging the formation of the Creative Cities in East and Southeast Asia, in order to promote social welfare.

These proposals aim to help address challenges such as:

1. the necessity of enhancing the capacity of management authorities to implement best management practices relating to World Heritage;
2. regulations that limit mutual funding between local governments and so make it difficult for some regions to participate in preserving World Heritage or cooperate in the preservation of cultural heritage in these areas. There is a need to improve cooperative relations between the central government, local governments, communities, schools and communities;
3. **human resources in local governments' general lack of understanding** about the importance of branding. They also lack understanding of digital technology that can make cultural heritage into regional branding;
4. the lesson of the pandemic that in managing World Cultural Heritage assets, a strategy is needed that involves all stakeholders related to the local culture-based economy and
5. the need to involve the current digital generation to instill the spirit of conservation, preservation of the environment, strategies for disaster mitigation, and preservation of cultural heritage and cultural diversity.

The two proposals are expected to cover development in cities as well as development in villages, both during the pandemic and post-pandemic times. Building a village through education for sustainable development in an effort to

promote World Heritage is expected to increase people's understanding of their ancestral culture and provide an understanding of the function of cultural preservation in protecting the environment for sustainable development. Cities also need to be developed sustainably. Creative cities, in this case, can provide an impetus to maximize the potential of the city in seeking to improve both the welfare and economy of the community. The role of ESD in these two routes is expected to provide harmony in the development of the country, namely through sustainable rural and urban development. As with the two wheels on a bicycle, when only one wheel is rotating, the bicycle will not run properly. However, if the wheels of sustainable rural development and the wheels of sustainable urban development rotate together, the country's development will be effective and efficient.

Our proposals focus on promoting a whole-institution approach through ESD, focusing on sustainable cities and communities. The whole-institution approaches should be promoted at all levels and in all settings. Schools and other educational institutions, and public and private sector organizations, should all be encouraged to implement sustainability plans or strategies.

Key elements for whole-institution approaches:

An institution-wide process that enables all stakeholders – policy makers, teachers, learners – to jointly develop a vision and plan to implement ESD in the whole institution;

Technical and financial support to the institution to support its reorientation, including for instance the provision of relevant good practice examples, training for leadership and administration, the development of guidelines and associated research and

Inter-institutional networks that facilitate mutual support such as peer-to-peer learning on a whole-institution approach, and increase the visibility of the approach to promote it as a model for adaptation.

Also, by promoting a whole-institution approach through ESD, we hope our two proposals promoting the World Heritage Sites and also encouraging the formation of the Creative Cities will help people in the area(s) understand:

1. the historical reasons for settlement patterns and respecting heritage;
2. the basic principles of sustainable planning and building, and how to identify opportunities for making their own area more sustainable and inclusive and
3. the role of local decision-makers and participatory governance and the importance of representing a sustainable voice in planning and policy for their area.

This understanding will encourage everyone to develop their community in getting to know the natural and cultural environment, and also searching for potential in their area. It is also hoped that this understanding can foster awareness of the need for their self-development as well as development of the area they currently live in, and the need for the community to love and be proud of the heritage in their area.

In addition, the proposals that we submit also aim to encourage people in a city or around a heritage site to be able to:

1. develop a sustainable future vision of their community;
2. reflect on their region in the development of their own identity, understanding the roles that the natural, social and technical environments have had in building their identity and culture;
3. contextualize their needs within the needs of the greater surrounding ecosystems, both locally and globally, for more sustainable human settlements;
4. plan, implement and evaluate community-based sustainability projects and
5. co-create an inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable community.

Efforts to promote heritage need to be more deeply studied to support the creation of a sustainable society. That is why ESD has an important role, holistically encompassing various aspects of living a sustainable life, and this role has become even more important during this pandemic. From the examples above, we also consider that the role of ESD can also encourage the formation of the identity of a city, including its potential to become a sustainable and inclusive

creative city.

Challenges and opportunities for the projects in the Indonesian context:

Indonesian government policies formulated in efforts to protect cultural heritage are reflected in various regulations. The Cultural Heritage Law (Law) No.11 was promulgated in 2010, and was followed by Law No.5 of 2017 concerning the Advancement of Culture. These two laws are always referred to in formulating the direction of cultural development policies, especially in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), as well as the 2020-2024 Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) Strategic Plan. In the RPJMN there are 7 pillars of development, where the fourth pillar is "Building the Culture and National Character". The development of national culture and character has a central position in the framework of national development to create a nation-state that is advanced, modern, superior, competitive and able to compete with other nations. The RPJMN is one of the bases for the preparation of the 2020-2024 MoEC Strategic Plan. One of the topics in the Strategic Plan is "Problems and Potentials for Educational and Cultural Development".

Although there has been an improvement in various indicators of educational and cultural development, such as education participation rates, equal distribution of education quality, educational relevance, and cultural and language development, there are still a number of problems in the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Culture to promote education and culture. These problems are divided into 4 (four) categories: (1) low participation rates for early childhood education and higher education, (2) low learning outcomes, (3) geographic inequality of education quality, and (4) lack of awareness of the importance of culture, books and language. Meanwhile, the lack of awareness of the importance of culture can be seen from 4 (four) problems that arise, namely lack of awareness and understanding of: (1) cultural development, (2) the value of economic use of reserves and objects of cultural advancement, (3) regional language and literature, and (4) bookkeeping systems. Cultural heritage, the heritage of our ancestors, can also have economic value, for example as a tourist object, without losing its focus as a preserver of cultural artifacts. The low value of economic use of cultural heritage and objects of cultural advancement is in contrast to the

flourishing of the creative industry in Indonesia. The creative industry should work together with the Ministry of Education and Culture to explore the economic use of cultural heritage and objects of cultural advancement so that they can continue to support their independence and sustainability as a means of preserving national culture.

The following challenges in using Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to promote heritage and encouraging the formation of Creative Cities in East and Southeast Asia, can be identified:

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread to almost all countries in the world. According to data from worldometers.info/coronavirus at the date of writing 37,732,511 people had caught the virus, while the number of victims who had died was 1,081,146 people. In Indonesia, the virus has infected 333,449 people, and has claimed 11,844 victims (October 12, 2020, 00:08 GMT). The pandemic has significantly affected not only the health sector, but various other sectors including education, culture and the creative economy.

In the education sector, for example, many studies reveal the impact of **COVID-19 on students' ongoing learning, as well as on teachers**, and parents who accompany their children's learning process. A number of studies have also discussed various applications of online learning processes (Brilliannur et al., 2020; Yudiawan, 2020; Mastura & Santaria, 2020; Pujilestari, 2020; Pratama, et al., 2020; Retnaningsih, 2020; Permata & Bhakti, 2020; Komalasari, 2020; Fitriani & Gelang, 2020; Susmiati, 2020; Subarto, 2020; Abidin, et al., 2020; Herliandry, et al., 2020).

Meanwhile in Indonesia's cultural sector, government figures have shown that 78,432 cultural actors have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (<https://apb.kemdikbud.go.id>, 12 October 2020), while in the creative economy sector, 44,295 artistic and creative workers have been affected by the pandemic (<https://travel.kompas.com/read/2020/05/23/171852427/40-ribu-lebih-pekerja->

seni-dan-kreatif-terdampak-covid-19-kemenparekraf-ambil, 12 October 2020). Wicaksono (2020: 39-52) has suggested, however, that in addition to having an unfavorable impact on cultural actors and creative economy actors, the pandemic has also provided new opportunities for them, especially in creating. While the pandemic has led to almost all art events being postponed or even canceled, art activists can take the example of several world museums and galleries that provide virtual tours, such as at the Metropolitan of Art (New York, USA), the National Gallery of Art (Washington DC, USA), the British Museum (London, UK), and others. 360 degree photography technology can be used to show artworks in virtual exhibitions, and to present cultural heritage to the wider community, allowing people to access art and culture even during the pandemic.

In addition to the application of technology, other strategies are needed in order for local governments to support the use of culture to develop creative cities in their regions, for example the strategies carried out in the city of Pekalongan in relation to the craft of Batik and in the city of Bandung in relation to design (Ulumuddin, et al., 2020: 475-487). This is a challenge in itself for local governments who want to develop their respective cities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Understanding of Cultural Heritage

The Ministry of Education and Culture's Strategic Plan says that the biggest challenge in cultural preservation is awareness and understanding of cultural development and the value of economic use of reserves and objects of cultural advancement. If it is further narrowed down in the context of the protection and development of cultural heritage, the main problem is awareness and understanding of the importance of cultural heritage as well as the inadequate use of cultural heritage, in this case cultural heritage for the welfare of the community, especially communities around cultural heritage locations.

Various stakeholders have, in fact, already begun efforts to strengthen the understanding of cultural heritage. The results of a focus group discussion (FGD) on **'the Role of Education for Sustainable Development in Glorifying UNESCO**

Global Geopark Gunung Sewu in **Gunung Kidul Regency** on July 18, 2019, show that efforts exist to instill an understanding of cultural heritage in the community, especially the younger generation. One example is the Geopark Corner at Wonosari 1 High School Library, showcasing Gunung Sewu Geopark. The library also holds quite a number of books about Geoparks that have been donated by **various parties. The library's efforts aim to provide a comprehensive** understanding of the Geopark, so that the younger generation is proud of its natural and cultural heritage. Likewise, the Pacitan Regency government has introduced Geoparks to schools through the Museum Go To School initiative and the introduction of Geoparks through film screenings with a mobile cinema.

An FGD held in Sangiran (Ancient Human Heritage Site), also revealed the **existence of various efforts to increase the community's awareness and** understanding of heritage, for example through the holding of a travelling exhibition; visits to schools; inviting students to take educational tours to Sangiran; distributing publications about Sangiran to schools around Sangiran as well as to Provincial Cultural Offices and universities in Indonesia; the joint holding of the Sangiran Festival by 3 districts, raising topics related to Sangiran as a world cultural heritage site as well as cultural elements that exist today and can be developed; creation of a mobile cinema that introduces Sangiran through a short film and displays unique things about Sangiran to encourage students and the community in general to visit the site; inviting bloggers and influencers to make short films to raise the potential of Sangiran; and the compilation and publication on social media of a calendar of Sangiran cultural events by the Tourism Office, district authorities and communities of Sragen, Karanganyar and Boyolali.

Although various attempts have been made to introduce the Geoparks and Sangiran Early Man Site, the results of the FGD also concluded that information about Geoparks and Sangiran is actually still relatively minimal; that promotion to the wider community is also still lacking; and that community collective awareness about the importance of tourism is not there and is not ready, marked by the fact that many tourism potentials have not been developed.

Further efforts to introduce this cultural heritage can increase public awareness, which is expected to develop the potential value of this heritage. On a wider scale, the socio-economic constellation of communities in East and Southeast Asia, the introduction and understanding that leads to the use of cultural heritage framed in the form of tourism can strengthen cooperation in the region.

Globalization Challenges

One of the major strategic cultural challenges in the 2020-2024 RPJMN is the issue of "Weakening Cultural Resilience". Indonesia is a nation-state with a plural character, having a variety of ethnicities, customs, cultures, languages and religions. This plurality can be used as basic capital in encouraging Indonesia to grow and develop into a strong and superior nation-state. Indonesia also needs to respond to the flow of globalization which has a very wide impact, be it social, cultural, economic, or political. Globalization has made relations between countries more intensive, human mobility is easier and faster, and cultural exchanges between nations have become increasingly loose. If not properly anticipated, cultural exchange through globalization can weaken the cultural resilience of the Indonesian people. On the contrary, if managed properly globalization will result in stronger cultural resilience. In this era of globalization, the role of cultural heritage is very strategic considering that this heritage can strengthen the character and identity of the nation, which can strengthen cultural resilience. By being rooted in the nation's cultural heritage, the participation of the Indonesian nation in the world arena can be strengthened. Likewise, cultural heritage can be used to strengthen cultural diplomacy in the framework of realizing cooperation between countries, especially in the East and Southeast Asia region, and even realizing peace throughout the world.

The Challenges of the Emergence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0

The fourth industrial revolution is already having an impact on the development of various aspects of life in the community and the state environment, including the economic, social, cultural, educational and political fields. The more advanced science and technology used by humans creates a pattern of

dependence between humans and regions, because in the current era, territorial boundaries are no longer a barrier to interaction and exchange of cultures between humans, groups and regions.

Today's technological developments have been used by countries to develop a digital culture, with increasing impact on the media industry and users. It is very easy nowadays for us to get information on a great many things, with many items of cultural heritage recorded and stored in the virtual universe, through photos and videos. Users prefer to save their activities on social media and hope that someday it can help them remind them of what has happened in their lives. While it would be quite sad if all of our data were stored only in digital form, because even the digital world is not free from threats such as loss of data due to viruses or human error, the internet and all the results of the digital culture that it produces will become digital artifacts that will later become a source of literature.

The use of virtual reality technology in several countries (including Indonesia) is still relatively new and still developing, but in several countries, the use of virtual reality has progressed much further. Research results from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) state that only 2% of the public visit museums and 5% visit historical places. The use of virtual reality is expected to be able to increase the interest of both local and foreign people in visiting such places by providing new experiences and knowledge.

A culture that is dynamic and continues to develop requires supporting technology, such as in digital archive storage. The concern of the world community and the participation of the government in various countries is needed to ensure recording and archiving of the regional culture of their respective countries. The digitization of cultural assets is one way to protect the country's diverse cultural heritage for the next generation.

Therefore, it is a challenge for regional countries to work together to create innovation and digital creations as a form of preservation of cultural heritage as world heritage. Countries that are members of UNESCO must be able to maintain

their cultural heritage as world heritage through digitalization as a form of globalization. With the use of technology, the preservation of this cultural heritage will create creative spaces which in the end will foster regional creativity by creative cities.

Generation Characteristics

Currently the millennial generation, known as the digital generation, is having an increasing impact on the world. The millennial generation was born in a time of world economic expansion and is synonymous with the world of globalization and its practices. This generation believe in technology that is able to create a workspace anytime and anywhere, and does not necessarily like conventional work spaces.

It has been suggested that the millennial generation has less of a tendency to care about the social conditions around them, such as politics or economic and cultural developments in the country, and that they may care more about the freedom to develop their own individual lifestyles, sometimes holding unrealistic ideas. According to Alvara Research Center (2017) data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) shows that 50% of Indonesia's productive age population comes from the millennial generation, which in 2020 to 2030 is estimated to reach 70%. They will play an important role in various positions in the next 10 to 20 years in Indonesia (Ali and Purwandi, 2017).

In the coming years, the world will be ruled by generation Z and generation Alpha, which are characterized as being less focused than millennials, but more versatile; more individual, more global, more open-minded; they get into the workforce faster, and are more entrepreneurial. However, it has been suggested that they are more individual, selfish, do not like to be regulated, give up easily, prefer to modernize, and do not like manuals and conventional ways of doing things. These generational characteristics and changes represent a challenge for the preservation of cultural heritage, as consideration must be given to engaging younger generations in ways that attract them and ensuring that they understand the importance of cultural heritage preservation.

Project 1:

The role of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in promoting heritage in East and Southeast Asia

Objective (s)	Variable(s)	Sub-Variable(s)/ Dimension(s)	Indicators	Required data (These are guidelines - and can be developed in the field)	Research Method(s)	Actor(s)
Analyze the role of ESD in promoting heritage	Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)	Environment Community Economy ESD-Sourcebook 2012	<p>Environment: The carrying capacity of the environment (the ability of the environment to support life in it) to honor heritage</p> <p>Sustainability of the environment (the forest / environment around heritage)</p> <p>The philosophy of living in harmony with nature</p> <p>Natural disasters</p> <p>Availability of ground water</p> <p>Sea and coast</p> <p>Land</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Community: Level of education</p> <p>Community participation</p> <p>Basic rights of society (clothing, food, housing, health, education)</p> <p>Demographics / population dynamics (structure, size, population distribution,</p>	<p>Environmental data: Any environment in the vicinity of the heritage</p> <p>How do people value the environment around the heritage</p> <p>How do people maintain the environment</p> <p>Has there ever been a natural disaster in the heritage area</p> <p>Biodiversity around the heritage area</p> <p>How to transfer knowledge related to the environment (non-formal)</p> <p>Community data: Community concern for heritage</p> <p>The level of education of the communities around the heritage</p> <p>Security and order around the heritage</p> <p>Village government related</p>	<p>Selection of Research Sites</p> <p>Informant Selection</p> <p>Data Collection Techniques</p> <p>Observation</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>Study of literature</p> <p>FGD</p> <p>Data Analysis Techniques</p> <p>Analysis of qualitative description</p> <p>CIPP</p>	<p>Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs</p> <p>Local Government</p> <p>Education Authorities</p> <p>Cultural Authorities</p> <p>Principals</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>Students</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>Community</p> <p>Management Body</p> <p>Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Expert Team</p> <p>Team of Intangible Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Experts</p> <p>Authority Bodies</p> <p>Technical</p> <p>Implementation Unit for Education and Culture</p> <p>Society</p>

			<p>change in population) Security and order Governance</p> <p>Economy: Good infrastructure Adequate public facilities Access to information Increased income Changes in economic structure Employment growth</p>	<p>to heritage</p> <p>Economic data: Infrastructure (roads, bridges, public facilities, restaurants, souvenirs, etc.) are available in the heritage area Income of residents around the heritage Changes in the livelihoods of residents around heritage Equitable distribution of population income Types of work around the heritage</p> <p>Context Concepts and policies Masterplan</p> <p>Input Teaching materials Curriculum Funding Infrastructure Cooperation between stakeholders</p> <p>Process Implementation of learning Capacity building for</p>		
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				<p>teachers and education personnel The learning processes How learning is done by the teacher Extracurricular activities Community involvement</p> <p>Output Understanding of local government Understanding of teachers and educators Students increasingly understand, love and are proud of the existence of heritage Branding awareness Transfer of knowledge from generation to generation</p> <p>Outcome People increasingly love, and are proud of the existence of heritage Society values diversity The community supports the preservation of cultural diversity</p> <p>Protection data: What are the efforts to save heritage by the community and government officials</p>		
				<p>Conservation indicators, according to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia on Cultural Heritage number 11 of 2010:</p>		
				<p>Dimensions: Preservation Appreciation</p>		
				<p>Promoting Heritage</p>		

Protection: Rescue Security Zoning Maintenance Restoration					
Development: Increased potential value Information Promotion Research Revitalization Continuous adaptation					
Utilization: Exertion People's welfare Form of utilization					
Appreciation Indicator: Understanding Honoring Attitude / behavior Love Pride Caring					

				<p>venues</p> <p>Appreciation Data: The extent to which the community / authorities / young generation understand heritage What awards are given by the community / authorities / young generation Forms of appreciation What is the attitude of the community / authorities / young generation towards heritage Forms of love for heritage Forms of pride in heritage Forms of concern for heritage</p>		
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Project 2:
The role of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in encouraging the formation of Creative Cities in East and Southeast Asia

Variable	Dimensions (aspects) that need to be explored	Detailed information required	Method of collecting data	Actor(s)
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)	The ESD dimensions that need to be explored are related to creative cities: Environmental education Community education Economic education (creative)	Environmental Education: Environmental education model that has been implemented and can support the development of creative cities Environmental education plans that align with creative city programmes Community education Community education patterns aimed to strengthen the development of the creative city Economic education (creative) Creative education schemes that are being developed to strengthen the position of creative cities	Observation Interview Study of literature FGD Questionnaire (optional)	A, B, C, G + M = Academic institutions (A), Business (B), Community (C), Government (G), Media (M) Government (G): Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs Local Government Education authorities Cultural Authorities Technical Implementation Unit for Education and Culture Academic institutions (A): Principals Teachers Students Colleges Community (C) Creative hubs (co-working Space; makerspace) Creative Community Business (B) Entrepreneurs
Creative City In this case, the city / district is capable of	Creative City dimensions that need to be explored: Creative capital Creative arenas	Detailed information needed regarding Creative City: Creative capital		

<p>exploring, utilizing, developing, managing and conserving creativity, as well as utilizing science and technology to develop local potential (human resources, culture, economic commodities) so that it can become an example of regional excellence and local identity, to encourage increased welfare, and the achievement of sustainable development</p>	<p>Enablers Creative process The role of stakeholders</p>	<p>Local creative community: Local potential as an advantage and identity of the city / district; A place for collaboration between the government, the creative community, the business world, and academia Creative arenas (creative space) Creative space that can foster creativity and innovation Public space as a center of activity & interaction for creative economy actors Enablers Ecosystem that can integrate part or all of the process of creation, production, distribution. City / district facilities & infrastructure, which can encourage creativity Local government development programmes related to creativity Creative process The creation stage Production stage Distribution stage</p>	<p>Media (M) Media</p>
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Lao National Commission for UNESCO

Mr. Vongvilay SOUNTHAVONG



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Lao National Commission for
UNESCO
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FOREWORD

This preliminary survey presents the findings of the information describing the background information, organizational structure, function, achievement and the challenges of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO through a number of interviews, data collection, translated documents from Lao into English, and reports. I am certain that this information will be highly beneficial not only the National Commissions in East and Southeast Asia but also other member states. This compilation aims to provide the user with a comprehensive insight of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO from birth to the present.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Korean National Commission for UNESCO for extending their cooperation and support promoting the invisibility of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia for sharing identity, goals, and priorities for collaboration in the future. I hope that this information will be helpful for our public partners and the National Commission for UNESCO and beyond. I would like to appreciate the relentless effort taken by the interviewees in giving information during the collection of data which was compiled up to the final presentation of this survey.

Since this is the first survey we have conducted for the Lao National Commission for UNESCO, we have inevitably missed some information during its compilation, but the feedback and suggestions from you and the member states would give us the utmost support for the furtherance of the quality of the survey, which will be highly appreciated and incorporated in the next publication.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silinthone SACKLOKHAM
Secretary-General
Lao National Commission for UNESCO

PROFILE OF THE LAO NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Laos is officially known as the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), located in the center of Indochina and sharing borders with China to the north (416 km), Myanmar to the northwest (236 km), Thailand to the west (1,835 km), Cambodia to the south (492 km) and Vietnam to the east (1,957 km). With a total area of 236,800 square kilometers, around 70% of Laos' terrain is mountainous, reaching a maximum elevation of 2,820 meters in Xieng Khouang Province. The landscapes of northern Laos and the regions adjacent to Vietnam, in particular, are dominated by rough mountains.

Lao PDR has 50 officially recognized ethnic groups, with the following four linguistic groups being the largest: (a) the Lao-Tai; (b) Mong-Khmer; (c) Hmong-Mien; and (d) Sino-Tibetan. However, within these major groups, the Lao-Tai have registered much lower poverty rates than the other three non-Lao-Tai groups: in 2012, 25 percent of Lao-Tai were considered poor compared to 42 percent or more for the other three groups. This stands in contrast with the fact that the three non-Lao-Tai groups make up 65 percent of the total population.

Since Lao PDR joined UNESCO on 9 July 1951, the country has focused on developing, building solidarity and a sustainable and peaceful society as the objective of UNESCO by providing its National Commission with the status, structure, and resources necessary to enable it to effectively discharge its responsibilities to UNESCO in accordance with Article VII of the Constitution.

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO (Lao NatCom) body was then established in accordance with the Article 7 of the UNESCO Constitution, which aims to contribute to development and preservation of peace, stability, and human solidarity accordance with the charter of UNESCO through education, **sciences, culture, and communication to implement and support UNESCO's** activities, including but not limited to HIV/AIDS, ASPnet and the policies adopted by UNESCO in each period.

Later, Lao NatCom collaborated with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, **UNESCO's office in Bangkok, UNESCO's office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions, National Sub-Commissions, Ministries, and Organizations** to support capacity building in many areas for officials such as Education for All (EFA), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Global Citizenship Education (GCED), Gender Equality (GE), Inclusive Education (IE), Climate Change Education (CCE), Conventions for 1970-1995, 2003, 2005, and so on.

Now, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO continues to promote the SDGs, GCED, and other UNESCO activities as well as the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritages of Lao PDR with sub-commissions concerned and continues to strengthen cooperation with UNESCO member states.

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO is under the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Sports. Address: Setthathirath Road, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR. P.O. Box 067, Tel/Fax: +856 21 212108, email: laonesco@yahoo.com and laonesco@hotmail.com.

(1) Organizational Structure

The Ministry of Education and Sports⁴, abbreviated as "MoES", is a governmental organization which acts as a secretariat to the government and under macro-level management for education and sports throughout the country. It is also the development center of human resources according to the three characteristics and five principles of education.

➤ MoES's organizational structure⁵

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO (LNCU) is under the organizational structure of the Department of External Relations⁶ (DER), which consists of 4 Divisions and 2 Offices as follows:

⁴ Decree on the Organization and Movement of the MoES No.253/PM, dated 26/5/2020

⁵ Agreement on the Role and Responsibility of the Minister and Vice Minister of MoES No. 2909/MoES, dated 17 July 2020

⁶ Agreement on the Organizational Structure and Movement of the Department of External Relations No. 3419/MoES, dated 10 August 2020.

1. Administration Division;
2. Bilateral Cooperation Division;
3. Multilateral Cooperation Division;
4. Treaty and International Organization Division;

5. Lao National Commission for UNESCO (LNCU) and

6. Lao National Anti-Doping Organization (Lao-NADO).

➤ **Organizational Structure of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO**

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO (LNCU), an administration structure component under the Department of External Relations at the Ministry of Education and Sports, is decreed by the Prime Minister to have the Minister of Education and Sports as a Chairperson, Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism and Deputy Minister of Science and Technology as Vice Chairmen under the Agreement on the Role and Function of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO No.: 1973/MoES.LNC, dated 22 May 2020 below:

➤ **The chair and vice chairpersons of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO have functions and a scope of rights as follows:**

Functions of the Chairperson

1. Supervise the Vice Chairperson to implement based on duties of responsibility;
2. Supervise the National Commissions to organize a meeting before and after the UNESCO General Conference in order to prepare comments and disseminate the accomplishments of the UNESCO General Conference;
3. Supervise the Lao National Commission for UNESCO to manage, collaborate, and seek technical and financial support for education, culture, science, information, and communication.

Functions of the Vice Chairperson

1. Advice on promotion in collaboration with the other organizations of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and UNESCO;
2. Advice to implement the recommendations of UNESCO in Lao PDR;
3. Advice to disseminate methods to the mass media, state and private organizations on policy and UNESCO's activities;
4. Advice to nominate Lao candidates to participate in UNESCO's General Conference;
5. Advice to cooperate with the National Commissions of the State members of UNESCO and other International Non-governmental Organizations;
6. Advice to implement other duties assigned by the Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO.

Rights of the Chairperson

1. To appoint positions on the Sub-commissions;
2. To call for meetings of the Chairperson and Sub-commissions;
3. To call for ordinary meetings and invite experts and high-level officials to participate.

Rights of the Vice Chairperson

1. To advise the Sub-commission under the responsibility to carry out the assigned duties;
2. To call for a meeting of the Sub-commission under its supervision;
3. To propose to appoint in order to propose/change the position of the Sub-commission.

➤ Staff of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO

LNCU's staff is composed of government officials⁷ who are appointed to the position or recruited to positions such as Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, and Technical Staff which receive a salary and subsidy from the government budget.

⁷ Law on the Civil Servant No.: 74/NA, dated 18 December 2015

(2) Legal Status

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO is established in 1976 and was later appointed by a Decree of the Prime Minister No. 73/PM, dated 4 April 1996 to have a Chairman from the Ministry of Education and Sports and Deputy Minister of Education and Sports, Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism and Deputy Minister of Science and Technology as a Vice Chairman. In addition, the Approval Letter of the Minister of Education and Sports No. 1054/MoES/96 dated 28 August 1996 for the appointment of Consultant and Sub-Commission Committees gives them as follows:

1. Sub-Commission for Education
2. Sub-Commission for Culture
3. Sub-Commission for Communication and Information
4. Sub-Commission for Natural Sciences
5. Sub-Commission for Social Sciences

(3) Functions of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO

To effectively facilitate national and international cooperation, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO has a role for the secretary for the Minister and the **Ministry's Party Committee in managing, coordinating, and facilitating** for the effective goals of UNESCO through support in Education, Culture, Science and Communication in accordance with laws and regulations.

The functions of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO are as follows:

1. Disseminate and provide capacity building for concepts and information in relation to the activities and achievements of UNESCO;
2. Plan the annual budget to support the activities and movement of the office;
3. Consider all documents from UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, **UNESCO's office in Bangkok, UNESCO's office in Jakarta, and the Asia-Pacific National Commissions** related to the framework of education, science, culture, and communication;

4. Coordinate and seek technical and financial support according to the regulations and principles of the government for the development of education, science, culture, and communication prospects;
5. Support and follow up the implementation of the project with other parties using supported funds from UNESCO with success and effectiveness;
6. Coordinate with Sub-Commissions, Ministries and Organizations, and national technical groups in accordance with the education, science, culture, and communication themes of UNESCO;
7. Support and develop cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters in **Paris, UNESCO's office in Bangkok, UNESCO's office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions, General Sub-Commissions, Ministries, and Organizations;**
8. Cooperate with other parties for seeking and adopting new members for the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet);
9. Support and monitor the implementation of the Associate Schools **Project Network's activities for better understanding in Lao PDR;**
10. Collaborate with the concerned sector to monitor and evaluate the participation programme and other project plans received from UNESCO and other member states;
11. Promote and monitor the obligation fees resulting from being a member state and part of other international treaties;
12. Coordinate with the offices and divisions within the departments on the implementation of tasks;
13. Inspect, monitor, and evaluate, including sending reports of implementation results to higher-level officials to acknowledge and comment by period;
14. Implement other duties assigned by the minister.

(4) Functions of the Sub-Commission

Referring the Agreement on the appointment of the Sub-commission of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO No., 479/MOE, dated 11 February 2019, the chair of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO agreed:

1. Sub-Commission for Education

- 1) Director-General of the Higher Education Department, Head
- 2) Dean of the Faculty of Education, National University of Laos, Vice Head
- 3) Deputy Director-General of the Vocational Education Department, Committee
- 4) Deputy Director-General of the Teacher Education Department, Committee
- 5) Director of Education Research and Evaluation Center, Research Institution for the Education and Sciences, Committee
- 6) Deputy Director-General of General Education, Committee
- 7) Deputy Director-General of Department of Non-formal Education, Committee
- 8) Deputy Director-General of the Early Childhood Education Department Committee
- 9) Head of Inspection, Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Physical and Arts Education Department, Committee

1.1 Function of the Sub-Commission for Education

- 1.1.1 Function as a secretariat for the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO
- 1.1.2 Conduct research and executive briefings regarding **UNESCO's documentation and report to higher-level officials** for consideration
- 1.1.3 Arrange meetings, planning, and submit an annual report to the Lao National Commission for UNESCO to summarize
- 1.1.4 Cooperate and follow up on official documentation sent from the Lao National Commission for UNESCO
- 1.1.5 Participate in the national and international meetings of UNESCO
- 1.1.6 Cooperate and notify the Lao National Commission for UNESCO in case of any implementing activity or project of UNESCO

- 1.1.7 Celebrate important UNESCO calendar events in relation to education
- 1.1.8 Promote and disseminate information and the activities of UNESCO through all forms of media
- 1.1.9 Carry out the duties involved in a press release platform for UNESCO
- 1.1.10 Call meetings for the internal Sub-Commission for Education in order to plan and prepare the annual report and discuss the issues concerned
- 1.1.11 **Prepare the budget plan for participation in UNESCO's** Conference regarding the area of its responsibility
- 1.1.12 Consider choosing among the concerned sectors under the Sub-Commission for Education to propose projects for the Participation Programmes of UNESCO
- 1.1.13 Implement other duties as assigned by the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO.

2. Sub-Commission for Culture

- 1) Director-General of the Heritage Department, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Head
- 2) Deputy Director-General of the Performing Arts Department, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Vice Head
- 3) Deputy Director-General of the Printing Department, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Committee
- 4) Deputy Director-General of the Propaganda, Training and Culture **Department, Lao Woman's Union**, Committee
- 5) Deputy Director-General of the Mass Culture Department, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Committee
- 6) Deputy Director-**General of the Inspection Department, Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union**, Committee.

2.1 Functions of the Sub-Commission for Culture

- 2.1.1 Function as a secretariat to the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO

- 2.1.2 Conduct research and executive briefings regarding **UNESCO's documentation and report to higher-level** officials for consideration
- 2.1.3 Arrange meetings, planning, and submit an annual report to the Lao National Commission for UNESCO to summarize
- 2.1.4 Cooperate and follow up on official documentation sent from the Lao National Commission for UNESCO
- 2.1.5 Participate in the national and international meetings of UNESCO
- 2.1.6 Cooperate and notify the Lao National Commission for UNESCO in case of any implementing activity or project of UNESCO
- 2.1.7 Celebrate important UNESCO calendar events in relation to culture
- 2.1.8 Promote and disseminate information and the activities of UNESCO through all forms of media
- 2.1.9 Carry out the duties involved in a press release platform for UNESCO
- 2.1.10 Call meetings for the internal Sub-Commission for Culture in order to plan and prepare the annual report and discuss the issues concerned
- 2.1.11 **Prepare the budget plan for participation in UNESCO's** Conference regarding the area of its responsibility
- 2.1.12 Consider choosing among the concerned sectors under the Sub-Commission for Culture to propose projects for the Participation Programmes of UNESCO
- 2.1.13 Implement other duties as assigned by the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO.

3. Sub-Commission for Communication and Information

- 1) Director-General and Editor-in-Chief of Lao Press in Foreign Language, Head
- 2) Deputy Director-General of the Tourism Promotion Department, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Vice Head

- 3) Deputy Director-General of the Youth Affairs Department, Lao **People's Revolutionary Youth Union**, Vice Head
- 4) Deputy Director of Lao National Radio, Committee
- 5) Deputy Director-General of Lao National Television, Committee
- 6) Deputy Director of Lao News Agency, Committee.

3.1 Functions of the Sub-Commission for Communication and Information

- 3.1.1 Function as a secretariat to the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO
- 3.1.2 Conduct research and executive briefings regarding **UNESCO's documentation and report** to higher-level officials for consideration
- 3.1.3 Arrange meetings, planning, and submit an annual report to the Lao National Commission for UNESCO to summarize
- 3.1.4 Cooperate and follow up on official documentation sent from the Lao National Commission for UNESCO
- 3.1.5 Participate in the national and international meetings of UNESCO
- 3.1.6 Cooperate and notify the Lao National Commission for UNESCO in case of any implementing activity or project of UNESCO
- 3.1.7 Celebrate important UNESCO calendar events in relation to communication and information
- 3.1.8 Promote and disseminate information and the activities of UNESCO through all forms of media
- 3.1.9 Carry out the duties involved in a press release platform for UNESCO
- 3.1.10 Call meetings for the internal Sub-Commission for Communication and Information in order to plan and prepare the annual report and discuss the issues concerned
- 3.1.11 **Prepare the budget plan for participation in UNESCO's** Conference regarding the area of its responsibility

3.1.12 Consider choosing among the concerned sectors under the Sub-Commission for Communication and Information to propose projects for the Participation Programmes of UNESCO

3.1.13 Implement other duties as assigned by the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO.

4. Sub-Commission for National Sciences

- 1) Deputy Director-General of the Sciences Department, Ministry of Science and Technology, Head
- 2) Deputy Director-General of the Planning and Cooperation Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Vice Head
- 3) Vice Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, National University of Laos, Committee
- 4) Deputy Director-General Hygiene and Health Promotion Department, Ministry of Health, Committee
- 5) Deputy Director-General of the Industry and Handicraft Department, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Committee
- 6) Vice Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, National University of Laos, Committee
- 7) Deputy Director-General Policy and Legal Affairs Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Committee

4.1 Functions of the Sub-Commission for Natural Sciences

4.1.1 Function as a secretariat to the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO

4.1.2 Conduct research and executive briefings regarding **UNESCO's documentation and report to higher-level officials** for consideration

4.1.3 Arrange meetings, planning, and submit an annual report to the Lao National Commission for UNESCO to summarize

4.1.4 Cooperate and follow up on official documentation sent from the Lao National Commission for UNESCO

- 4.1.5 Participate in the national and international meetings of UNESCO
- 4.1.6 Cooperate and notify the Lao National Commission for UNESCO in case of any implementing activity or project of UNESCO
- 4.1.7 Celebrate important UNESCO calendar events in relation to the natural sciences
- 4.1.8 Promote and disseminate information and the activities of UNESCO through all forms of media
- 4.1.9 Carry out the duties involved in a press release platform for UNESCO
- 4.1.10 Call meetings for the internal Sub-Commission for Natural Sciences in order to plan and prepare the annual report and discuss the issues concerned
- 4.1.11 Prepare the budget plan for participation in UNESCO's Conference regarding the area of its responsibility
- 4.1.12 Consider choosing among the concerned sectors under the Sub-Commission for Natural Sciences to propose projects for the Participation Programmes of UNESCO
- 4.1.13 Implement other duties as assigned by the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO.

5. Sub-Commission for Social Sciences

- 1) Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Laos, Head;
- 2) Deputy Director of the Institute of Historical Research, National Institute of Social Sciences Research, Vice Head;
- 3) Deputy Director-**General of Youth Training, Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, Committee;**
- 4) Deputy Director-**General of the Women in Development Department, Lao Woman's Union, Committee;**
- 5) Deputy Director-**General of the Sport for All Department, Ministry of Education and Sports, Committee;**

- 6) Head of Sports Development Division, Ministry of Education and Sports, Committee;
- 7) Head of Project Management Division, Lao National Olympic Committee, Committee

5.1 Functions of the Sub-Commission for Social Sciences

- 5.1.1 Function as a secretariat to the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO
- 5.1.2 Conduct research and executive briefings regarding **UNESCO's documentation and report to higher-level** officials for consideration
- 5.1.3 Arrange meetings, planning, and submit an annual report to the Lao National Commission for UNESCO to summarize;
- 5.1.4 Cooperate and follow up on official documentation sent from the Lao National Commission for UNESCO
- 5.1.5 Participate in the national and international meetings of UNESCO
- 5.1.6 Cooperate and notify the Lao National Commission for UNESCO in case of any implementing activity or project of UNESCO
- 5.1.7 Celebrate important UNESCO calendar events in relation to the social sciences
- 5.1.8 Promote and disseminate information and the activities of UNESCO through all forms of media
- 5.1.9 Carry out the duties involved in a press release platform for UNESCO
- 5.1.10 Call meetings for the internal Sub-Commission for Social Sciences in order to plan and prepare the annual report and discuss the issues concerned
- 5.1.11 **Prepare the budget plan for participation in UNESCO's** Conference regarding the area of its responsibility
- 5.1.12 Consider choosing among the concerned sectors under the Sub-Commission for Social Sciences to propose projects for the Participation Programmes of UNESCO

5.1.13 Implement other duties as assigned by the Vice Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO.

(5) Budget Structure

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO requires adequate financial resources to enable it to fulfill its mission and functions. The main sources of funding are:

➤ **Government funding**

- Principal budget: The government provides financing primarily to cover staff costs, with other operating and activity expenditures allocated annually in accordance to the Law on State Budget⁸ in order to allocate funds to sectors and localities based on the characteristics, standards of work, and specifics of each sector and locality, such as geographical location, population and area, and development needs, that are established by the government and submitted to the National Assembly for consideration and approval.
- Authorization of expenditure⁹: The MoES, as well as line ministries, sectors, and provinces prepare an expenditure plan according to the approved budget allocation so that the Treasury can follow and inspect every disbursement. Every month and every quarter, the Treasury reports the disbursement progress to the Budget Department. At the same time, all ministries and sectors report to the Budget Department and submit the plan for the next quarter.
- At the Ministry level: To ensure the implementation of the education budget, there are four divisions in the Department of Finance (DOF) of the MoES: Budget Division, Accounting Division, Controlling Division and Cashier Division. Each division has an administrative role, responsibility and lines of communication to ensure the effective and correct use of all expenditures of education sectors for every installment, by respective categories,

⁸ Law on State Budget No. 02/NA, dated 26 December 2006

⁹ Educational financing and budgeting in Lao PDR, page 33:
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000122458>

with eventual submission to the budget department or provincial finance division.

- The Lao National Commission for UNESCO proposes the annual budget plan to MoES to support the activities for each period. It is mainly focused on the framework of Education for All (EFA), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Global Citizenship Education (GCED), Gender Equality (GE), Inclusive Education (IE), Climate Change Education (CCE), Culture of Peace, Conventions for 1970-1995, 2003 and 2005, World Concerns and other UNESCO's activities.

➤ **International funding**

Lao NATCOM is required to receive internal and international funds to support the activities in accordance with the Decree No. 357/Gov, dated 09/10/2019 on the Official Development Assistance, of which the technical and financial support is from the Lao Government, UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO's office in Bangkok, UNESCO's office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions for UNESCO, especially the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and international organizations in supporting short- and long-term projects, capacity development workshops, training, scholarships, consultation meetings, seminars and conferences.

The process of submitting project proposals is done from the Lao National Commission for UNESCO to the Department of Planning (Ministry of Education and Sports), Ministry of Planning and Investment, and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1. PAST: CHRONOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION AS A NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Since Lao PDR joined as member of UNESCO on 9 July 1951, the country focused on developing, building solidarity and a sustainable and peaceful society as the

objective of UNESCO by providing its National Commission with the status, structure, and resources necessary to enable it to effectively discharge its responsibilities to UNESCO in accordance with Article VII of the Constitution¹⁰.

❖ **THE BIRTH OF THE LAO NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO**

➤ **1970s-2010s**

In 1978, the first Secretary-General of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO, Mr. Phieng Sisoulath, was appointed by the agreement of the H.E. Kaysone Phomvihane, the Prime Minister of Lao PDR and H.E. Phoumi Vongvichit was the first Chairperson of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO. He drove the creating, building of solidarity and manageability of harmony for the society of Lao PDR as per the targets of UNESCO. He began framing the Lao National Commission with the status, structure, and resources necessary to enable it to effectively discharge its responsibilities to UNESCO in accordance with Article VII of the Constitution.

In 1982, the second Secretary-General of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO, Mr. Khamphao Phonekeo – the Cultural Consular for the Lao Embassy to France between 1972 and 1975 – continued creating the body of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO. The purpose was to serve and promote international understanding through intellectual cooperation by involving governmental and non-governmental institutions in the formulation and execution of **UNESCO's programme. Hence, it was a focal point for the government** and UNESCO to implement and seek assistance from the international community for technical and financial support to develop and integrate improved content of activities for education, science, culture, and communication in accordance with global changes in each period.

The main activities for this period were: Publishing a quarterly

¹⁰ UNESCO's constitution: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

magazine for the Lao National Commission for UNESCO in the Lao language to disseminate the information of the National Commission **and UNESCO's programmes, proposing to set up five sub-commissions** for UNESCO including roles and functions, seeking funds for capacity building for officials on World Heritage, the process of collecting the **10 lists of Laos' properties to submit to UNESCO and the 1972 Convention**¹¹ concerning Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage. In 1996, the 5 sub-commissions for UNESCO (Sub-Commission for Education, Sub-Commission for Culture, Sub-Commission for Communication and Information, Sub-Commission for Natural Sciences, Sub-Commission for Social Sciences) had been approved by the Minister of Education and Sports No. 1054/MoES/96, dated 28/08/1996.

In 1996, Mr. Heng Daovannaly, who had been assigned to work as Cultural Consul for the Lao Embassy to France between 1994 and 1995, was appointed to be the Third Secretary-General of the Lao National **Commission for UNESCO. At the time, work for the 10 lists of Laos'** properties was continuing and national property information was being collected for submission to UNESCO. A year later, Luang Prabang City¹² was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage in 1995. Luang Prabang is a cultural heritage, and an outstanding example of the fusion of traditional architecture and Lao urban structures with those built by the European colonial authorities in the 19th and 20th centuries. Its unique, remarkably well-preserved townscape illustrates a key stage in the blending of these two distinct cultural traditions. The framework of heritage had continued, of which Vat Phou¹³ – an outstanding example of the integration of a symbolic landscape of great spiritual significance to its natural surroundings, exhibiting a remarkable complex of monuments and other structures over an extensive area between rivers and mountains – had been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage

¹¹ 1972 Convention: <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-562-4.pdf>

¹² Luang Prabang World Heritage City: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/479/>

¹³ Vat Phou World Heritage: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/481/>

site in 2001. The Lao National Commission for UNESCO had sought funds to continue exploring the Plain of Jars and Hin Nam No.

In 2001, the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)¹⁴ linked educational institutions to schools in Laos, with the goal to build peace in the minds of children and young people by promoting new teachings and **learning approaches based on UNESCO's core values and priorities** in order for them to become role models in their community and beyond. ASPnet Schools also have the opportunity to exchange experiences, knowledge, and good practices with schools, individuals, communities, policymakers, and society as a whole around the world.

In Luang Prabang province, the Orphanage Secondary School (an ASPnet School) had been awarded as a model school for cultural diversity, providing teaching and learning for the culture of peace, from which it had been awarded the prize under the motto of **"Peace is in our hands"** by UNESCO on 14 January 2001, which H.E. Phimmason Leuangkhamma, Minister of Education and Sports, handed over to Mr. Sengkham Khamphichit, former school principal of Orphanage Secondary School.

Years later, ASPnet Schools have spread through 5 provinces (Luang Prabang, Xieng Khuang, Huaphan, Chapasack provinces, and the capital Vientiane) from the north to the south of Laos, for 33 schools in total. The schools range from primary schools to secondary schools and teacher training colleges.

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO also launched a project to disseminate



¹⁴ ASPnet Schools: <https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/Pages/default.aspx>

knowledge on prevention of HIV/AIDS infection to 8 border provinces, and provided computers and geographical measurement machines (GIS and GPS) to the National University of Laos.

In 2009, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sisamone Sithirajvongsa was appointed as the third Secretary-General of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO. The main focus for this year was education, given that **education transforms lives and is at the heart of UNESCO's mission to build peace, eradicate poverty and drive sustainable development**. It believes that education is a human right for all throughout life and that access must be matched by quality, for which UNESCO provides global and regional leadership to strengthen education systems and make it possible to respond to global changes through education with gender equality as underlying principles as described in the Medium-Term Strategy¹⁵ for 2008-2013. According to this, UNESCO shall accord priority to Africa and to gender equality in all its fields of competence throughout the duration of the Medium-Term Strategy, which is envisaged for priority groups and groups of countries.

Education for All (EFA)

Education for All is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth, and adults as stated in the World Education Forum in 2000 in Dakar, in which 164 governments pledged to achieve EFA and identified six goals by 2015.

The National Education for All Action Plan has undergone a careful process of consultation with senior technical officials of key Ministries, education specialists of each department of the Ministry of Education and Sports, provincial Vice-Governors and Heads of Provincial Education Services and the participation of the donor community. It **was approved by the Government's cabinet meeting on 30 December**

¹⁵ Medium-Term Strategy: <https://bit.ly/3copBxr>

2004, which contains the Government's policy and strategy framework for action for basic education. It covers development targets and programmes for six basic education sub-sectors, including Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Primary Education, Lower Secondary School, Youth and Adult Literacy, Skill Development Programme for Disadvantaged Groups, as well as cross-cutting themes such as gender, inclusive education, special programmes for children with special needs and children with socio-economic difficulties, school health and HIV/AIDS prevention. The Education for All National Action Plan for 2003-2015 seeks to accomplish three major tasks: equitable access, improved quality and relevance, and strengthened education management to achieve the six goals of Education for All.

The Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA)

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO facilitated the implementation of Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) with technical and budgetary support from UNESCO Paris and UNESCO Bangkok to concentrate on 4 priority segments: Teacher Training Education, Secondary Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and Non-formal Education, over 2 phases (CapEFA Phases I-II). It also held 9 Capacity Development for Education for All Steering Committee Meetings.

The launch of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Education for Sustainable Development is about enabling us to constructively and creatively address present and future global challenges and



create more sustainable and resilient societies. Sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation, or financial instruments alone. We need to change the way we think and act, which requires quality education and learning for sustainable development at all levels and all social contexts.

In 2011, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO organized a training workshop to disseminate the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to Department, Institutions, Teacher Training Institutions, Provincial Education Services, Principals, and teachers in the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) including the topics below:

- Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR);
- Education for Culture of Peace (ECP);
- Inclusive Education (IE);
- Gender Equality (GE).

Climate Change Education

ASPnet schools in Laos have implemented the activities of UNESCO that promote strengthening the capacity of the principal, teachers, and students on climate change education in order for them to have basic knowledge in action to reduce, respond, and adapt appropriately to climate change.

The objective of the Asian RICE (Regional Initiative for Climate change Education) Project is designed to develop small-scale community-based projects on Climate Change Education (CCE) in developing countries throughout Asia, in which it supports partnership projects of local communities and schools that are able to benefit from small grants, technical assistance, and capacity building programmes from the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU), aiming to form a volunteer network of local communities and schools, working together

to develop and implement innovative educational activities based on real-life issues related to climate change in different local contexts:

- Protection of UNESCO-designated sites from climate change: A variety of UNESCO-designated sites including World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks are exposed to serious threats from climate change;
- Promoting renewable energy with appropriate technology
- Energy-saving practices to reduce CO₂ emissions;
- Ecotourism and protection of forests;
- Organic farming and national resource management plans;
- Appropriate responses to climate change that can be practiced in schools and the community.

The launch of Conventions

UNESCO is convinced that no development can be sustainable without a strong culture component. Culture has been recognized as an enabler and driver of sustainable development, peace, and economic progress. All UNESCO cultural programmes focus on building a sustainable development basis through the protection and safeguarding of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, protection, and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions in accordance with the Medium-Term Strategy of 37 C/4 as approved by the General Conference at the 37th Session of UNESCO.

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The 32nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO held in Paris from 29 September to 17 October 2003, referring to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1996, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1996 considered the importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of

cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development. This is underscored in the UNESCO recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore of 1989, in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Culture Diversity of 2001, and in the Istanbul Declaration of 2002 adopted by the third Round Table of Ministers of Culture which recognized that communities (indigenous communities in particular), groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich diversity and human creativity.

Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression (2005)

The 33rd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO held in Paris from 03-21 October 2005 adopted the creativity of individuals, groups, and societies with cultural content to produce and distribute cultural goods or services to societies and to understand creativity in art production, dissemination, distribution and consumption of cultural expression.

Communication & Information

UNESCO assists developing countries in strengthening their communication capacity by developing independent and pluralistic media and improving media access to ICT, facilitating the acquisition of basic computer skills for all (CFA) and further popularizing the implementation and use of information technology and communication for sustainable development and peace.

Youth

Young women and men have the creativity, the potential, and the capacity to address the world's issues today. The young must be fully

engaged to participate fully in the development of their societies, eradicate poverty and inequality, and foster a culture of peace.

UNESCO introduced its Youth Forum as a fundamental part of the UNESCO Youth Programme in 1999, held every two years to provide innovation and ongoing opportunities for youth to work in dialogue **with UNESCO's member countries in each topic, and especially the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth 2014-2021.**

The objective of the forum is to empower young people, access their ideas concerned and their perspectives, and to improve their educational and learning environment to acquire skills and competencies to enable youth collaboration at the time of their transition to adulthood.

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO works in connection with the **Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union to send Lao adolescents and youth** to participate in various international conferences, especially the UNESCO and ASEAN youth forums. Besides this, two officials from the Lao National Commission for UNESCO have attended the forum to share and learn from experiences in the Member States.

Development & Cooperation

The Lao National Commission cooperates with many experts and competent partners in responding to global change to navigate the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2003 Convention, the 2005 Convention, and to strengthen the frameworks of education, science, culture, and communication. The Lao National Commission also promotes Global Citizenship Education for better international understanding, allowing one to learn, live, and work together without cultural barriers.

➤ **2010s-2020s**

In 2012, Mr. Somboun Massouvanh was appointed as the fifth Secretary-General of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO. The main focus for this year was actively contributing in the development of human resources in education, science, and culture in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO's office in Bangkok, UNESCO's office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions, and acting as counseling parties in areas for UNESCO's programmes and being able to seek technical and financial support for the implementation of Education, Science and Culture in many forms such as dissemination of policies and concepts of UNESCO programmes, training, seminars, monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet). The works that can be summarized are as follows:

The launch of the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. In Laos, the 17 SDGs are integrated in which action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO has distributed the input for SDG 4 and Education 2030 implementation, with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in particular, including but not limited to capacity building for the Culture of Peace (CoP), Gender Equality, Inclusive Education, Disaster Risk Reduction, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Whole-Institution Approach (WIA) to the Departments of Education and Sports and other educational

institutions, Provincial Education and Sports Service, principals and teachers of ASPnet schools and beyond.

UNESCO Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritages

In 2013, a series of training sessions for the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage ¹⁶ had been implemented and amplified on several occasions to learn the process of compiling local heritage to the National Property List and nominating the priority list to the status of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Khaen Music of the Lao People had been listed as the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, ¹⁷ in which the Khaen music of the Lao people is played with a mouth organ that resembles panpipes but



made with bamboo tubes of varying lengths, each with a metal reed. The player blows into the instrument through an air chamber and the sound produced depends on the size of the tube. Khaen music is **popular in all regions of the Lao People's Democratic Republic** due to its harmonic richness. It is usually part of village festivals and it is customary for people listening to it to become active participants in the songs and dances, rather than merely spectators. Khaen music is an integral part of Lao life that promotes family and social cohesion. Thanks to the use of bamboo, the practice is also linked to natural agriculture and healthy lifestyles. Families play an important role in transmitting the art and Khaen player associations exist in many local communities where young people can learn the art. To maintain the practice in spite of lifestyle changes – including urbanization – several

¹⁶ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

¹⁷ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/khaen-music-of-the-lao-people-01296>

local communities, associations, and groups have begun various initiatives to consolidate and promote it through formal and non-formal education.

The National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with UNESCO **Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO’s office in Bangkok, UNESCO’s office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions, General Sub-Commissions, Ministries, and Organizations** continued to support capacity building in many areas for officials to collect information background on the 15 components including large carved stone jars, stone discs, secondary burials, tombstones, quarries and funerary objects dating from 500 BCE to 500 CE. The jars and associated elements are the most prominent evidence of the Iron Age civilization that made and used them until its disappearance around 500 CE, and it is known as the Plain of Jars as the third UNESCO World Heritage Site registered by Lao PDR.



The Plain of Jars¹⁸ was listed as UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2019, and is protected under the Law on National Heritage of 2013, **supported by the Decree of the President of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the Preservation of Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage of 1997, and the Provincial Governor’s Decree concerning the Management and Conservation of the Plain of Jars World Heritage Sites No. 996.** In addition, Decree No. 870 concerning the Establishment and Operation of the Plain of Jars Heritage Technical Division set up the structure and duties of the newly established site **management office. The provincial governor’s Decree No. 995 provides** a mechanism for funding site conservation through revenue sharing

¹⁸ The Megalithic Jar Sites in Xiengkhuang – Plain of Jars: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1587/>

from tourism. Implementation of the mechanisms of protection occurs at the national, provincial, district, and village levels. Coordination is provided by the National Committee for the World Heritage and the Xiengkhuang Heritage Steering Committee.

Short- and Long-Term Projects

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO collaborates with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO's office in Bangkok, UNESCO's office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions, General Sub-Commissions, Ministries and Organizations to implement short- and long-term projects such as CapED, WIA project, Happy School Project, Craft Design Project in Luang Prabang, Lao-Korean Bridge Project to achieving SDG 4 (2020-2024), health education support for safe school reopening in response to COVID-19, and the Participation Programme (PP).

Publication

The 2002-2020 Global Education Monitoring Report Summary¹⁹, Advocacy Guide for Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education²⁰, Climate Change Starter's Guidebook²¹, Framework for Reopening Schools and the information card for COVID-19 were translated into Lao and have been printed for distribution.

2. PRESENT: MAIN PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LAO NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Since Lao PDR has no UNESCO field office, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO has been attached to the Department of External Relations under the

¹⁹ Global Education Monitoring Report Summary: <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/allreports>

²⁰ Advocacy Guide for Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000221034_lao

²¹ Climate Change Starter's Guidebook: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000211136>

Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Education and Sports, with the staff of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO few in number and young in age with a limited budget for activity implementation. Lao NATCOM therefore focuses on support from the Ministry of Education and Sports and in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO Bangkok, and the Korean National Commission for UNESCO on dissemination and introduction of UNESCO concepts such as Whole-Institution Approach on Climate Change Education, Disaster Risk Reduction, Gender Equality, Global Citizenship Education, Education 2030, and Sustainable Development Goal 4.

A number of dissemination workshops have been organized for the Departments, Divisions, and line institutions of the Ministry before continuing to promote to the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) of Lao PDR through information dissemination, a workshop for principals and teachers, monitoring school implementation, and annual meetings.

➤ **CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS OF PARTICIPATION AS A NATCOM**

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO aims to contribute to the development and preservation of peace, stability, and human solidarity in accordance with the charter of UNESCO through Education, Sciences, Culture, and Communication to implement and support the activities and policies adopted by UNESCO for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

In this spirit, the Lao National Commission for UNESCO works in collaboration with the concerned departments to implement several projects:

- Cooperate with the Departments and Institutions concerned to design a Resource Pack for Global Citizenship Education in the Lao language under the Participation Programme (PP) of UNESCO, aiming to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and

globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies. The GCED in the Lao context will be focused on the three domains of learning: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral.

- Cooperation with the Department of Non-formal Education for the implementation of the Bridge Laos Project, in partnership with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, which aims to provide educational activities through Community Learning Centers in Lao PDR in the three provinces to contribute the achievement of the SDG 4:
 - Target 4.6 by 2030 to ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy;
 - Target 4.3 and 4.4 by 2030 to substantially increase the number of youths, adults, and women who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for employment for decent jobs and entrepreneurship;
 - Support all Lao citizens in gaining access to lifelong learning, **based on the individual's competence and conditions, through the provision of integrated formal and non-formal education** to support all to receive lifelong learning in order to develop an intellectual society to meet with the demands of development to achieve Target 4.7;
 - Other legal mandates that support non-formal education and lifelong learning, namely the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan, the Strategy on Education and Sport 2030, and Education Development Plan 2020.

- Cooperate with the Department of Teacher Education to implement the CapED project under the technical and financial support of UNESCO Bangkok for:
 1. Development of a national comprehensive teacher policy: 4 activities to be implemented;

2. Improvement of a database system for in-service teacher training: 2 activities to be implemented;
 3. Quality enhancement of pre-service teacher education programmes for pre-school teachers: 5 activities to be implemented;
 4. Capacity development on gender-responsive pedagogy in STEM education for teacher educators in TTCs: 5 activities to be implemented.
- Health education support for safe school reopening in response to COVID-19 under the financial support of UNESCO Bangkok and the Special Lao-Korean Bridge Project to provide public health education, information cards/posters, and dissemination through the CLCs and the ASPnet schools on how to prevent and protect oneself from communicable diseases that put further pressure on the health system's capacity to prevent, monitor and control outbreaks.

➤ **MAJOR NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS**

Lao NatCom collaborates with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO's office in Bangkok, UNESCO's office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions, General Sub-Commissions, Ministries, and Organizations to support UNESCO programmes:

- Coordinating and cooperating with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO's office in Bangkok, UNESCO's office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions:
 - Capacity Building for Education for All Project (CapED), Capacity Building for Education 2030 and Out-of-School-Children initiative;
 - the Bridge Laos Project. The initial success was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and the launch of the project in collaboration with the Department of Non-Formal Education in June 2020. By the end of 2020, it is estimated that 800 children, young people, and adults from the 6 target districts in

Savannakhet, Luang Prabang, and Xayyabouly Provinces will be enrolled in vocational training.

- The Lao-Korea Teacher Exchange Programme between the APCEIU and the Department of Teacher Education;
- KNCU Special Bridge Project on Public Health Education through Community Learning Centers for dissemination of health education for targeted CLCs and local communities, and provision of hygienic goods and products to community learning centers;
- UNESCO Bangkok and the Lao National Commission for UNESCO continue to implement health education support for school safety on reopening in response to COVID-19 through translating the guidebook, the framework of school reopenings and information cards;
- Collaborate with the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok to translate documents from English into Lao:
 - Practical Tips for Teaching Multi-grade Classes;
 - Incheon Declaration;
 - Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM) from 2012 - 2020;
 - Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
 - Global Citizenship Education: Topics and objectives of learning;
 - Guidelines for Happy Schools! A Framework for Learner Well-being in the Asia-Pacific
 - Guide for ASPnet School Coordinators.
- Sub-Commissions, Ministries, and Organizations to support UNESCO programmes:
 - Cooperate with the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism to disseminate the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit

Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and the 1995 Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

- Contribute in the preparation and collection of national property in collaboration with the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism to collect information on the Khaen Music of the Lao People to nominate and list as UNESCO Intangible Culture Heritage and continued to nominate the Lao National Property of the Xieng Khouang of the Plain of Jars as the third World Heritage Site of Lao PDR. Now, it intends to propose the Hin Nam No National Biodiversity Conservation Area as a natural World Heritage of Lao PDR and Vietnam, exploring the handicraft wisdom of the Lao community and traditional midwifery for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the World with Colombia, Germany and Luxembourg;
 - Evaluate and select applications for assistance from the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) of UNESCO to be used in programmes to promote reading culture, storytelling, writing, and publishing of Lao literature for children with disabilities in access to education.
- Human Resource Development
 - Nominate officials of the Ministry of Education and Sports to participate in short-term training in the Republic of Korea under the UNESCO / Republic of Korea co-sponsored Fellowships Programme for 10 persons;
 - Nominate officials of the Ministry of Energy and Mines to participate in a short training course in Poland under the UNESCO / Poland co-sponsored Fellowships Programme for 5 persons;
 - Nominate officials of the Ministry of Education and Sports to participate in short-term training in China under the UNESCO / China (the Great Wall) co-sponsored Fellowships Programme for 6 persons;

- Nominate officials of Ministry of Public Works and Transport to participate in short-term training in Russia under the UNESCO / ISEDC co-sponsored Fellowships Programme for 4 persons;
- Co-organize a workshop on the development of Gender Responsive Pedagogy for Lower Secondary School Teachers in Science, Technology, Engineer and Mathematics with 16 people from the center and 36 from the provinces, and continue to train Lower Secondary Teachers throughout the country in collaboration with the Department of Teacher Education;
- Nominate one official of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO to participate in UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) Regional Training for the National Commission for UNESCO in the Asia-Pacific Region, Japan;
- Coordinate with the Ministry and other departments to participate in several virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic such as:
 1. Regional Meeting of the National Commission for UNESCO;
 2. Consultation meeting on UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) and the Programme and Budget (C/5);
 3. Regional Meeting on the draft guidelines of the code of ethics for Artificial Intelligence (AI);
 4. Webinar of National Commissions for UNESCO on Together for Peace (T4P) initiative on the role of education on building a peaceful and sustainable future in the Asia-Pacific;
 5. Virtual Regional Workshop on Education Costing and Financing;
 6. Nominate officials from the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism to attend the online training course on cultural heritage conservation at the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU).

➤ **CHALLENGES TO CURRENT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION**

The Lao National Commission for UNESCO has been in active collaboration with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO's office in Bangkok,

UNESCO's office in Jakarta, Asia-Pacific National Commissions, General Sub-Commissions, Ministries, and Organizations to support capacity building in many areas for officials and in supporting UNESCO programmes, but some challenges remain. They are as follows:

- The officials at the Lao National Commission for UNESCO are young and few in number, their English capacity is still limited and their experience on implementing UNESCO programmes is not diversified;
- The capacity building for the officials of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO is still low and the officials have not been trained on the specific programmes;
- The budget to support the activities is limited and relies on support from the government and international organizations;
- Raising awareness of the local people on protection for World Heritage Sites is challenging, as they do not understand the cultural value of the sites and how to protect their local value;
- Communication with other Ministries and Sub-Commissions of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO, in which responses to requests such as data collection, surveys, etc. can take time.

3. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF PARTICIPATION AS A NATCOM

According to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it was adopted in 2015 with 17—Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals set a universal agenda for sustainable development in the interests of peace, equity and prosperity for all nations and peoples and the Lao National Commission for UNESCO continues to promote the activities of the SDGs, GCED, Artificial Intelligence, ASPnet schools, Geoparks and other UNESCO activities as well as the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritages of Lao PDR with sub-commissions concerned and continues to strengthen cooperation with UNESCO member states.

➤ **IDENTIFYING FUTURE COMMON CHALLENGES IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA (REGIONAL AGENDA SETTING)**

Coping with the immediate impacts of COVID-19 is a common challenge in East and Southeast Asia, in which it is needed to find policy to focus on the socio-economic response and provide four sets of recommendations for a recovery that leads to a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive future: tackling inequality, bridging the digital divide, greening the economy, and upholding human rights and good governance practices.

Referring to the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, about 40% of low and lower-middle income countries have not supported disadvantaged learners during the temporary school shutdowns. The key factors for exclusion of learners in education systems worldwide includes background, identity and ability (i.e. gender, age, location, poverty, disability, ethnicity, indignity, language, religion, migration or displacement status, sexual orientation or gender identity expression, incarceration, beliefs and attitudes).

In Laos, though schools were closed during the pandemic, they reopened on 2 June 2020, while classes for the highest grades per school type (grades 5, 9 and 12) reopened 2 weeks earlier. To ensure the continuity of learning for these students during school closures, the Ministry of Education and Sports encouraged the educational institutions to create new learning modalities supporting remote and online learning. However, due to the limited technological capacity of teachers and insufficiency of ICT infrastructure and equipment, effective remote and online learning was difficult to achieve.

Regarding the return to school and addressing learning limitations in case of future epidemics:

- Prior to the reopening of schools: Estimating the progress of teaching during the school closure in relation to the curriculum is essential.

- Changes to terms and curriculum: To complete the teaching curriculum and ensure student learning and progression to the next grade, the school calendar was extended for another two months (June/July 2020), with a focus on key learning subjects and outcomes rather than following the remaining learning curriculum;
- Support for continued education: To ensure that students re-enroll, the schools should work closely with each Village Education Development Committee to encourage communities and parents, especially vulnerable families, to support the return to school;
- Additional measures: The Ministry encouraged schools to provide additional catch-up tutorial support for students with lower study performances from lack of access to remote learning during the school closures. To further assist students, the Ministry and development partners should develop and distribute teaching and learning materials directly to schools, including the school management, while not placing limitations on the budgets to acquire emergency health and hygienic goods for students and teachers.

In case of future outbreaks and to guarantee “comprehensive and impartial quality training” and advance “long-lasting learning for all” to leave no one behind, the Ministry develops remote learning modalities for school closures including learning through national radio and TV programmes. The development of various forms of distance learning using ICT and digital equipment is aimed at equitable access for students to learning sources. Schools can choose the most suitable learning modality for their students. However, face to face learning continues to be the main learning modality for students in remote areas and for vulnerable groups.

➤ **PROPOSALS/SUGGESTIONS FOR JOINT PROJECTS**

Lao PDR in collaboration with the KNCU is accelerating the implementation of the 2020 Lao Bridge Project in the midst of COVID-19 difficulties. The project aims to promote safe and hygienic learning environments for

Community Learning Centres and to build understanding of public health issues at the community level, especially for those from communities who are at high risk due to lack of information and difficulties accessing public health services through the training of public health education and provision of necessary hygienic products (hand care products such as cleaner and sanitizer to help support effective hand washing, and masks) to protect themselves in local communities. This Bridge Project will promote public health education to the six selected CLCs in three provinces (Savannakhet, Luangprabang and Sayyabouly Provinces), for two CLCs per province and residents around the selected areas.

However, the aims of Lao NATCOM are to contribute to the development and preservation of peace, stability and human solidarity in accordance with the charter of UNESCO through Education, Sciences, Culture and Communication to implement and support the activities and policies adopted by UNESCO for each period.

Science in Laos is quite rare, but an initial forming of the focal team to develop the Geopark has taken place under the financial support of the Lao government.

The Lao Geopark Team will include a representative from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Science and Technology and National University of Laos to carry out the following:

- o Short term
 - Designate the Ministry focal point person for Geoparks in Laos;
 - Disseminate the concept of UNESCO Geoparks to ASPnet schools and the local community;
 - Arrange a dissemination meeting on UNESCO Geoparks.

- Mid-term
 - Set-up the Geopark Committee/working group/task forces among the concerned ministries;
 - Identify sites for the national aspiring areas for Geoparks;
 - Do surveys/collect data on the aspiring areas, especially priority sites for UNESCO Global Geoparks;
 - Submit the aspiring areas for UNESCO Global Geoparks for consideration.

- Long-term perspectives
 - Capacity building/disseminating information for Geopark staff;
 - Promote the Geoparks through publications;
 - Make road maps and plan budgets for Geopark management;
 - Provide technical and financial support for committees/networks/UGGps/aspiring areas;
 - Liaising/advising/monitoring to regularly improve and develop the Geoparks.

It is recommended for East and Southeast Asia members to establish UNESCO Global Geoparks all around the region in close collaboration with the Global Geoparks Network, and to nominate more Geoparks in East and Southeast Asia.

Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

Mr. Nachin DASHNYAM



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



• Mongolian
• National Commission
• for UNESCO

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FOREWORD

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges and brought devastating consequences to the global community. Countries have made great efforts to prevent and mitigate the negative effects of the crisis; however, the complexity of this crisis calls for solidarity, cooperation and collective efforts. Coordinated activities, especially at the regional level, are all the more important not only for the achievement of an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable recovery from the pandemic but also for creating a better future and a better post COVID-19 world.

It is in this spirit that I greatly commend the launch of the joint project on enhancing the cooperation of National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia. The pandemic has shown us what we can achieve united; and this project has set the foundation for an increased regional cooperation between the National Commissions on working towards a common goal.

The consolidated joint research report, which is the first of its kind in that it is **analytical and written from researchers' perspectives, will make a significant** contribution to the development of the participating National Commissions. I believe that the report will provide us an opportunity to see how the National Commissions evolved and what they have achieved since their establishment as well as what challenges and obstacles they are facing currently. This will make it possible not only to define a collective identity of National Commissions in East and Southeast Asia, but also to learn from the experiences and best practices of the participating countries.

I am certain that this project will be a stepping-stone to formulating more joint projects among National Commissions that contribute to the realization of **UNESCO's vision and the effective implementation of its programmes, to ultimately achieve the Organization's mission of fostering peace through dialogue and mutual understanding.** The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO has **included project proposals within each of UNESCO's fields of competence in its**

survey report, and hopes that they will be combined with those of the other participating National Commissions in order to initiate a collaborative project that **promotes UNESCO's Strategic Transformation and the 2030 Agenda.**

The Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) has always played an important role in stimulating dialogue and enhancing cooperation in the region. On behalf of the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Secretary General Mr Kwangho Kim and his entire team for their commendable efforts as well as the tremendous innovation and positivity they bring to the region.

Uyanga SUKHBAATAR
Secretary-General
Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO

INTRODUCTION

Based on the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO, which recognizes and provides a role for Member States and their National Commissions to act together through partnerships at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) initiated a project in 2020 to conduct a preliminary survey on National Commissions in East and Southeast Asia to identify common issues within the region. The main objective of this joint preliminary survey is to accumulate data and suggestions for joint projects from 10 National Commissions – KNCU and another 9 participating National Commissions in East and Southeast Asia – in order to launch more in-depth research and/or a joint project among the National Commissions in 2021.

Understanding the importance of cooperation in the region, rich in diversity in terms of culture, language and religion, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO (MNCU) presents information and experiences of its past to contribute to the process of defining a collective identity of National Commissions in the region.

The designated researcher at MNCU conducted analytical research using secondary data analysis and archival study as the main research methodology. The researcher compiled data from the annual reports of MNCU, Memorandums of Understanding on Cooperation between the Government of Mongolia and UNESCO, **information on UNESCO's website and archives, and national policy documents** such as the Long-term Development Policy of the Government of Mongolia "Vision 2050", laws, regulations and national development programmes of the relevant sectors, and Ministerial orders. The main data and information on the MNCU was collected from the books "*The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO*²²", "*UNESCO and Mongolia: 55 Years of Partnership*²³", in addition to the recollections, memoirs, and notes of historians, and photo copies of original

²² *The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO*, published by MNCU, editors Uyanga S., Batbold Sh., 76 pages, 2017, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

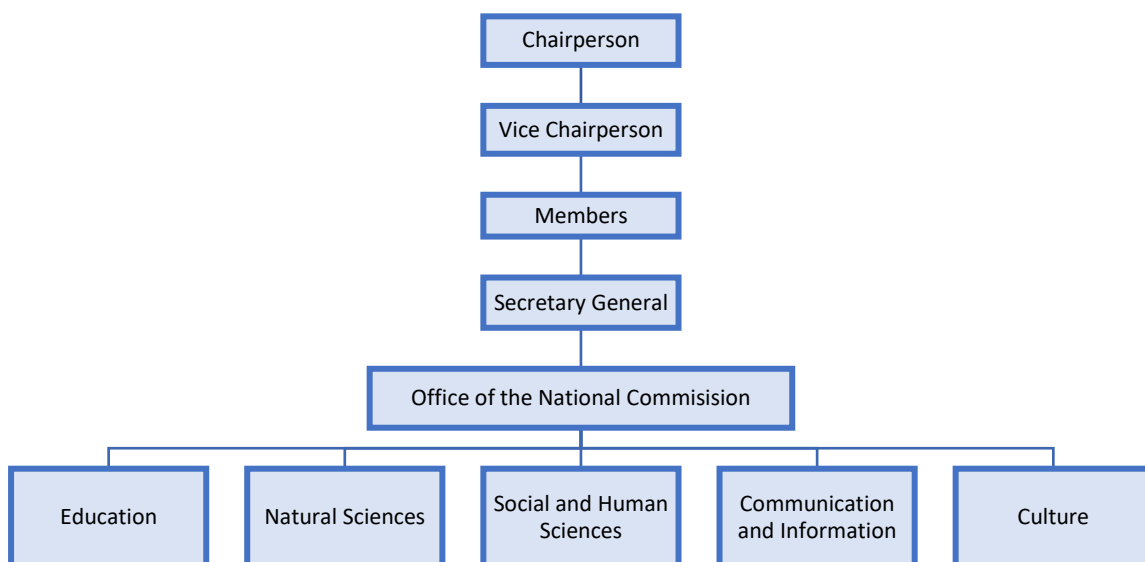
²³ *UNESCO and Mongolia: 55 Years of Partnership*, Recollections and notes of the history-makers, issued by the MNCU, Editors: Tuvshintugs Ts and Batbold Sh, Advisor: Uyanga S., 246 pages, 2017, Ulaanbaatar

documents and photos related to activities of the MNCU at the Central Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia.

PROFILE OF THE MONGOLIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The Chairperson of the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO (MNCU) is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and the Vice Chairperson is the Deputy Minister for Education, Culture, Science and Sports. In order to ensure the coordination and support of ministries and other governmental organizations, relevant officials who can contribute effectively to the implementation of UNESCO's programmes are designated as members of the MNCU. The Secretary General is appointed by the Chairperson and the office of the MNCU operates under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The MNCU has a total of 9 staff, including 5 programme specialists in charge of sectors covered by UNESCO.

Figure 1. The structure of the MNCU



The MNCU is a governmental organization in charge of coordinating UNESCO's programmes and activities in Mongolia and putting forward recommendations on the ratification of UNESCO conventions, agreements and other legal instruments.

The MNCU's budget is allocated from the state budget.

1. PAST: CHRONOLOGY OF THE MONGOLIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AT THE TIME OF MONGOLIA'S ACCESSION TO UNESCO

During the period from the 1950's to the 1960's, Mongolia's average yearly GDP growth was around 10.1 percent due to increased state investment into different economic sectors and implementation of five years plans, which progressed the country's economic and social development. For example, as compared to 1940, the state investment had increased by 33 times in 1960. Mongolia, previously only known as an agrarian society, declared herself an agrarian-industrial²⁴ country.

Following the cultural revolution, Mongolia aimed to eradicate illiteracy and diversified the curricula of universities and colleges while also creating the foundations of a strong technical and vocational educational system.

At that time, Mongolia started to receive international recognition for its independence and in 1961, became a member of the United Nations and began to establish diplomatic ties with western countries. Despite the progress in socioeconomic development, Mongolia only had economic relations within the socialist bloc and was separated from the developed western countries. Although Mongolia made certain developments during that period, as the Soviet Union and other socialist countries providing assistance to Mongolia were far behind the western countries in terms of scientific development, introduction of the latest scientific and technological advancements was limited in Mongolia²⁵.

²⁴ Vision 2050: Mongolia's long-term Development Policy Document, First Draft, pp 12, 2019, Government of Mongolia,

²⁵ Vision 2050: Mongolia's long-term Development Policy Document, First Draft, pp 11-12. 2019, Government of Mongolia,

On 1 November 1962, Mongolia became a Member State of UNESCO in accordance with rules 98 to 101 of the Rules of Procedures of the General Conference and Articles II and XV of UNESCO's Constitution²⁶. On this date, the gateway to modern scientific and technological advancement opened to Mongolia in addition to more opportunities to build peace through international cooperation in the field of education, the sciences and culture.

1.2 INFORMATION CONCERNING THE BIRTH OF THE MONGOLIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO (MNCU)

After Mongolia joined UNESCO as a Member State, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO (MNCU) was established under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) by Resolution No.77 of the Government of Mongolia dated 1 March 1963, in accordance with Article VII of UNESCO's Constitution.

Subsequently, Ms Oyun E, Director of the Art Studies Department and Board Member of the Ministry of Culture, was appointed as the Chairperson of MNCU, while Mr Tserentsoodol P, Director of the International Organizations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, became the first Secretary General of the MNCU²⁷. However, the MNCU could not operate as an independent unit, with only a single official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of activities concerning UNESCO. Even though this was not an easy task and not enough to ensure full implementation of related activities, it should be noted that efforts made during these times greatly contributed to the socioeconomic development of Mongolia.

In 1964, less than two years after joining UNESCO, Mongolia's accession to the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention* (1954) and ratification of the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* (1960) were finalized. By 1990, however, the active cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO had slightly stalled due to the country's somewhat closed-door policy. At that time,

²⁶ UNESCO website: <https://en.unesco.org/>

²⁷ *UNESCO and Mongolia: 55 Years of Partnership*, Recollections and notes of the history-makers, issued by the MNCU, Editors: Tuvshintugs Ts and Batbold Sh, Advisor: Uyanga S., 2017, Ulaanbaatar

Mongolia had not yet joined major UNESCO's conventions such as the *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education* (1989), *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (1972), *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (1970) and *Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific* (1983) etc., and as such Mongolia had minimal participation in these fields.

The Rules of the MNCU, which were adopted by Resolution No.18 of the Government of Mongolia²⁸ dated 29 January 1993, defined the main purpose of the MNCU as to develop the cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO in line with the national laws, **UNESCO's Constitution and universally accepted principles of international law and to ensure Mongolia's active participation in UNESCO's programmes and activities.**

Through Resolution No.18, the MNCU not only clearly defined its rules and organizational structure, but also expanded its activities with enriched content and forms, and increased outputs. Furthermore, by transforming from a mere unit within one Ministry's structure to an organization with its own staff and specialists, the status and structure of the MNCU became further strengthened. In the newly formed political conditions²⁹ of the country, this was an important step towards developing the cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO.

The main duties of the MNCU are as follows:

- To establish and develop cooperation with UNESCO, its field offices, centers, bureaus, and national commissions of other Member States.
- **To formulate proposals and recommendations concerning Mongolia's stance on issues related to the development and implementation of UNESCO's plans and programmes, and to negotiate with UNESCO.**
- To coordinate activities aimed at ensuring that Mongolia fulfills its obligations to implement conventions to which Mongolia is a party, as well

²⁸ Resolution # 18 of the Government of Mongolia, dated January 29, 1993

²⁹ In January 1992 the Mongolian Parliament adopted the Constitution of Mongolia, which proclaims the **country's** aspiration toward the supreme objective of developing a human, civil, democratic society in the country

as recommendations, bilateral or multilateral agreements and contracts with UNESCO and relevant other organizations.

- To coordinate the activities of national organizations and their policies concerning UNESCO in order to integrate efforts and ensure the correlation of foreign relations objectives in the education, science, culture and information sectors.
- To elaborate proposals or recommendations on joining UNESCO's Conventions, international treaties and other legal instruments and to submit them to the relevant authorities.

Following the transition from a centrally planned society to a democratic society with a market-oriented economy, the MNCU became more active and its activities more diverse beginning from 1996. During these years, overseeing the activities of the MNCU was included in the duties of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. However, the affiliation of the MNCU was yet again changed to that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Resolution No.172 of the Government of Mongolia dated 15 December 2012 and the Rules of the MNCU were amended accordingly. The current structure of the MNCU is shown in the Profile section of this report.

In order to ensure the coordination and support of ministries and other governmental organizations, relevant officials who can contribute effectively to **the implementation of UNESCO's programmes are designated as members of the MNCU** (Please refer to Figure 1). With the new establishment³⁰ of the Ministry of Culture, there is the possibility of including relevant officials from this new ministry **in the MNCU's** governing body.

The Secretary General is appointed by the Chairperson and the office of the MNCU operates under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Currently, the MNCU is operating with a total of 9 staff, including 5 programme specialists each in charge of one sector covered by UNESCO. The MNCU receives its funding from the state.

³⁰ The organizational structure, strategy and limit on job positions of the new Ministry of Culture were approved by the Government Regular Meeting on July 16, 2020

Since the birth of MNCU, there have been nearly six decades of profound partnership between Mongolia and UNESCO, building on shared objectives and values that have strong roots in Mongolian society.

1.3 INFORMATION CONCERNING MNCU'S MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE OF MONGOLIA FROM THE 1960'S TO THE 1980'S

- 1964 Acceded to UNESCO's Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention (1954) and ratification of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- 1965 Established the National Water Commission as a basis for the Mongolian National Committee **of UNESCO's Hydrology Programme**
- 1969 Established the Permanent Delegation of Mongolia to UNESCO
- 1970 UNESCO Nadezhda K. Krupskaya Literacy Prize awarded to the Institute of Language and Literature of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences for its valuable contribution to the eradication of illiteracy
- 1971 Signed the first Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Government of Mongolia and UNESCO
- 1973 Organized an **International Symposium on "The role of nomads in the development of culture and civilization in Central Asia"** in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- 1978 Signed a further Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Government of Mongolia and UNESCO
- 1978 Started **to participate in UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme**
- 1983 Joined the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)
- 1983 Elected as a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO for 1983-1987
- 1985 **Organized the 7th "Song and Music Symposium and Festival of Asian Countries"** in Ulaanbaatar
- 1987 Organized the International Symposium on the Issue of Universal Literacy

The visits to Mongolia of two Directors General of UNESCO, firstly by Mr René Maheu in 1971 and then by Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow in 1978, played an **important role in further solidifying the MNCU's efforts to contribute to the development and peace of Mongolia.** The election of Mongolia to the Executive Board of UNESCO from 1983 to 1987 and the successful organization of several UNESCO related activities in Mongolia also enhanced the cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO. Furthermore, signing Memorandums of Understanding on Cooperation between the Government of Mongolia and UNESCO, which became a tradition, was vital to **the success of the MNCU's activities.**

As seen from the above, the activities of the MNCU were robust and well recognized by UNESCO. Another example of this would be the project on establishing a Polytechnical College under the Mongolian National University with a budget of 1,5 million USD that commenced in 1965. Within this project, lecturers and specialists were trained abroad and the necessary teaching equipment and tools were provided to the college. By 1968, the college was ready to start its activities with 6 faculties to teach 1000 students, who were eager to graduate as engineers in their home country of Mongolia. In 1971, Mr René Maheu, Director General of UNESCO, paid a visit to the college and highly praised its activities, noting that it was making solid contributions to the development of the country as a direct result of the fruitful cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO. This institution has now expanded and developed into the Mongolian University of Science and Technology, one of leading national universities of Mongolia.

1.4 INFORMATION CONCERNING THE MNCU'S MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE OF MONGOLIA FROM THE 1990'S TO THE 2000'S

The early 1990's is characterized as a transition period to a democratic society with a market-oriented economy in Mongolia. Aspiring towards the objective of developing a humane, civil, democratic society as declared in its newly amended Constitution, Mongolia was able to join the main conventions of UNESCO. In order to further raise awareness of the role that education, the sciences and

culture play at different stages in the country's development, Mongolia continued to invite the Directors General of UNESCO to visit. The invites were accepted in 1992 by Mr Federico Mayor, in 2002 by Mr Koichiro Matsuura and in 2011 by Ms Irina Bokova. For MNCU, these visits ensured success in implementing the MOUs between Mongolia and UNESCO. Presidents of Mongolia also highly valued the cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO, which was highlighted in their visits to UNESCO Headquarters in 1996 and 2016.

- 1990 Acceded to UNESCO's Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
 The UN and UNESCO proclaimed the International Literacy Year (ILY1990) through the initiative of Mongolia and other Member States
- 1991 Acceded to UNESCO's Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific (1983) and Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989)
- 1992 Signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Government of Mongolia and UNESCO
- 1994 Mr Natsagdorj Sh, Prof., Academician and Historian, awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru medal for his contribution to writing the book **"History of Civilization of Central Asia"**
 Mr Bira Sh, Prof., Academician, Member of the International Editorial Board awarded UNESCO Gold Medal for publishing a book on Mongolia and Central Asia
 Started to participate in the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme
- 1997 Established a Centre on Informal Distance Learning
 Accession to UNESCO's Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar)
- 1998 Established the International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations - UNESCO category II institution in Ulaanbaatar,

- Mongolia
- Established a National Observation Centre of UNEVOC
- 1999 Established the Mongolian National Committee for World Heritage³¹
Organized the Second Meeting of Secretaries General of National Commissions for UNESCO in East Asia
- 2001 **Organized an International Symposium on “Dialogue between Civilizations: Interactions between Nomadic and other Civilizations”**
- 2002 Organized a **National Seminar on “The Management Issues of the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape”**
Organized a National Forum on Education for All
- 2003 HE Mr Bagabandi Natsag, President of Mongolia, participated by invitation in the launch ceremony of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) and delivered an opening speech on behalf of Member States
Joined the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)
Established the Mongolian National Committee on Safeguarding Documentary Heritage within the Framework of the Memory of the World Programme
- 2004 **Organized an International Conference on “Culture and Dialogue Between Civilizations: The Current Status and the Future of Nomadic Civilization in the Globalization Era”**
- 2005 **Organized the “Week of UNESCO” on the occasion of UNESCO’s 60th Anniversary** with the participation of delegations from UNESCO Headquarters and Field Offices in Beijing and Bangkok.
Ratification of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)³²

³¹ Since establishment of the Mongolian National Committee for World Heritage, the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape (in 2004), Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai (in 2011), and Great Burkhan Khaldun Mountain and its surrounding sacred landscape (in 2015) have been inscribed as Cultural World Heritage Sites, while Uvs Nuur Basin (in 2003), and Landscapes of Dauria (in 2017) have been inscribed as Natural World Heritage Sites.

³² Since Mongolia joined the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) in 2005, a total of 15 elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) has been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as follows: in 2008, Mongolian Intangible Cultural Heritage such as Traditional music of the Morin Khuur, Urtiin Duu, traditional folk long song; in 2010 Mongolian traditional art of Khöomei, Naadam, Mongolian traditional festival; in 2012 Falconry, a living human heritage; in 2013

- Established the Mongolian National Committee for the Memory of the World Programme³³
- 2006 Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO, awarded the Polaris Medal by Presidential Decree for his invaluable contribution to the development of **Mongolia's** education, sciences and culture sectors.
- 2007 A representative of Mongolia selected as an independent expert to evaluate the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)
Mongolia elected as a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO with the support of 107 Member States,
Accession to UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) and International Convention against Doping in Sport (2005)
- 2008 Mr Yasuuki Aoshima, Director of UNESCO Beijing Cluster Office awarded the Friendship Medal by Presidential Decree
- 2010 Mongolia elected as a Member of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for the period of 2012-2013
- 2011 Mongolia elected as a Member of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme and Council of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education
Mr Gwang Chol Chang, Head of the Policy and Reconstruction Department, UNESCO Bangkok Office awarded the "Merit Worker" Medal of the education sector of Mongolia

Traditional craftsmanship of the Mongol Ger and its associated customs; in 2014 Mongolian knuckle-bone shooting; and in 2019 Traditional technique of making Airag in Khokhuur and its associated customs. The following items have been inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding: in 2009, Mongol Biyelgee, Mongolian traditional folk dance, Mongol Tuuli, Mongolian epic, Traditional music of the Tsuur; in 2011, Folk long song performance technique of Limbe performances - circular breathing; in 2013 Mongolian calligraphy; in 2015 Coaxing ritual for camels; and in 2017 Mongolian traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites.

³³ Since establishment of the Mongolian National Committee for the Memory of the World Programme, *Lu"Altan Tobchi", Mongolian Tanjur* (in 2011), and *Kanjur written with 9 precious stones* (in 2013) have been included in the Memory of the World while in 2017 the *Stone Stele Monument for Mongolian Tanjur* was recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register as an addition to the *Mongolian Tanjur*. In 2016, *Merged Garahin Oron, Woodblocks for the Tibetan-Mongolian Dictionary of Terms and Definitions* and *Sutra of the Great Deity Tara* were registered on the Asia-Pacific Memory of the World Register.

- 2012 Ms Beatrice Kaldun, Programme Specialist of Culture, UNESCO Beijing Office awarded the "Merit Worker" Medal of the culture sector of Mongolia
- Ms Enkhmaa D, Doctor, Researcher of the National Center of Maternity and Children Care selected as a fellow of the UNESCO-L'Oréal International Fellowship Programme
- 2013 Mongolia elected as a member of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication /IPDC/, the Council of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education, and the Council of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP) for period of 2013-2017
- Mongolia initiated a proposal on Supporting the Global Citizenship Agenda through Education for Democracy, with the subsequent adoption of a Draft Resolution by the 37th session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2013
- 2014 Mongolia elected as a member of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention (2003)
- Organized an experts' meeting on "Documentation of Intangible Heritage and Exchange of Experiences in Northeast Asia"** jointly with the Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (ICHCAP) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- Revised and ratified the Law of Mongolia on Protection of Cultural Heritage in accordance with the concepts and principles of UNESCO Conventions on the protection of Cultural Heritage.
- 2015 Organized a National Roundtable Meeting on the Enhancement of National Capacities and Assistance in the Understanding and Implementation of the 2005 Convention, including Strengthening of National Policies
- Organized a National Forum on Education for Sustainable

Development

- Ms Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO awarded the Polaris Medal by Presidential Decree
- 2016 Mongolia hosted the 24th meeting of the International Hydrological Programme-Regional Steering Committee for South East Asia and Pacific
- Organized the Sub-Regional Meeting for Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding in Northeast Asia on The Role of the Media in Raising Awareness about Intangible Cultural Heritage in collaboration with ICHCAP
- 2017 Organized a National Capacity Building workshop on Education Statistics, and a National Consultation on the Localization of Sustainable Development Goal 4 in Mongolia, and launched the Global Education Monitoring Report 2016
- 2019 Established the Mongolian National Committee for UNESCO Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme.

Education has always been at the heart of the cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO. Mongolia was one of the co-sponsors of UN resolution 56/116 entitled **“United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All”**, and as underlined by UNESCO, Mongolia took the pioneering role and supported UNESCO in coordinating activities for the Decade. Literacy is the precondition for not only exercising two fundamental human rights but also for acquiring essential life skills and basic education necessary for effective participation in the societies of the 21st century. Mongolia, recognizing that education must be given top priority in the national development policy, has implemented numerous projects and programmes ranging from literacy, basic education, and special needs education to policy and strategy enhancement in cooperation with UNESCO.

In the culture sector, the MNCU has successfully implemented many projects and programmes in cooperation with UNESCO. The latest success story is the implementation of the "Promoting Cultural Heritage - Petroglyphs" project. Within the framework of the project, "The Inverted Triangle" ethno dance performance and "Million Days of Mongolia" photo exhibition were organized on

12 December 2019 at UNESCO Headquarters with the purpose of promoting the diversity of cultural expressions and the cultural heritage of Mongolia as well as fostering international cooperation in the safeguarding and promotion of petroglyphs. The project provided a major contribution to the implementation of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, as well as the Stone Heritage National Programme and Action Plan of the Government.

Furthermore, with the support of UNESCO and Japan Funds-in-Trust, Mongolia **successfully implemented the project “Capacity Building for the Sustainable Development of Mongolian Museums” with publication of the “Museum Management” handbook** and inauguration of the study hall at the Researcher – Methodology Centre of the National Museum of Mongolia.

Within the framework of the UNESCO/Monaco Funds-in-Trust Project, the MNCU organized a national expert meeting on the **“Fight against Cultural Heritage Crimes” and published** a review of the Criminal Code, which later on supported the introduction of a chapter on **“Crimes against Cultural Heritage” in the Criminal Code of Mongolia.**

Mongolia also organized the **“National Consultation Meeting and Workshop on Mapping of Cultural and Creative Industries in Mongolia” with the support of UNESCO and Korea Funds-in-Trust.**

As seen from the above, the scope of MNCU’s activities has expanded and become much more diverse over time. The inscription of several nominations on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the World Heritage List and the Memory of the World Register as well as the nominations to several Intergovernmental **Committees of various programmes clearly demonstrate the MNCU’s success in the 1990s to the 2000s.** Becoming a Member State of UNESCO back in 1962 has helped Mongolia tremendously in propelling the development of its education, culture, science, and information and communication sectors.

2. PRESENT: RESEARCHING THE MNCU'S CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS

The MNCU's current areas of focus are based on the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Government of Mongolia and UNESCO (2016-2021). **The MNCU's joint efforts with UNESCO make an invaluable contribution to achieving equal access to education, to the development of science, information and communications, to the protection of national culture, history, heritage and the environment, to the introduction of technological achievements, and to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms.**

2.1 RESEARCHING THE MNCU'S CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS

The MNCU's current focus in the education sector is to promote education as a **fundamental right and to contribute to UNESCO's goal to provide quality education for all.** The MNCU supports national organizations in obtaining technical assistance from UNESCO, formulating recommendations and policy advice, fostering dialogue between stakeholders, capacity building, standard setting and promoting best practices in education by enabling **Mongolia's participation in UNESCO's activities in the education sector.** **Examples of current activities include the organization of national capacity building workshops, meetings on education sector planning, education statistics and SDG 4 indicators, education for sustainable development, global citizenship education, technical and vocational education, and ICT in education.**

The MNCU's focus in the culture sector is ensuring the effective implementation **of UNESCO's cultural** conventions, in line with provisions specified in the laws and regulations of Mongolia, including the National Programme for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the National Programme on Stone Heritage, the Action Plan of the Government for 2020-2024 and the 5-year guidelines for the development of Mongolia in 2021-2025. Furthermore, the MNCU is working with stakeholders to prepare for the nomination of elements on the National

Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and National List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, in addition to formulating innovative ways to engage with cultural heritage and develop young artists with the aim to raise awareness of the importance of preserving and developing our cultural heritage.

In the natural sciences sector, the MNCU is focusing on fostering scientific cooperation on critical challenges to sustainable development while strengthening science, technology and innovation (STI) systems and policies. **The MNCU is working on ensuring Mongolia's participation in UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme, the International Hydrological Programme and the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme, and learning about international experiences and best practices.**

The MNCU's focus in the social and human sciences sector is developing a culture of peace and fostering rights, inclusion and non-discrimination. The MNCU gives high priority to ensuring active participation in the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme and Youth Programme, in addition to making contributions towards achieving gender equality, decreasing inequality, promoting ethics and sports and empowering the youth.

In the communication and information sector, the MNCU aims to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image, by enhancing mechanisms for accessing knowledge and information (including ICT, and computer skills), strengthening media development, promoting freedom of expression (including online) and ensuring participation in the Memory of the World Programme.

2.2 MAIN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)

Understanding the importance of building of peace in the minds of children and youth, Mongolia joined the Associated Schools Network in 1983 and has been working very actively ever since. Currently there are 12 ASPnet member schools

(8 primary/secondary, and 4 secondary schools) in Mongolia. Each school has established a dedicated UNESCO cabinet, working in support of international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and quality education. Following several years with 12 ASPnet schools, Mongolia had 13 ASPnet schools between the years 2018 and 2020, after School No.6 was newly accepted into the network in 2018. However, one teacher training institute was deactivated and removed from the directory in 2020 due to its inactivity. Meanwhile, 2 new applications are currently pending with UNESCO.

Celebrating International Days observed at UNESCO is one of the main activities of ASPnet schools in Mongolia. Schools organize various activities for teachers, students and parents such as month-long **campaigns promoting UNESCO's** vision and objectives, and different types of competitions and debates. For instance, one-hour information and training activities were organized at provincial schools under the themes of "Water is our wealth", "Green Decoration" and "Project Hour" in order to raise awareness of sustainable utilization of natural resources and increase understanding of biological and cultural diversity issues. Following the inscription of the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List, many provincial schools actively started to initiate projects on **safeguarding the country's heritage sites and developing domestic tourism. Several training** workshops, meetings and discussions for teachers in the provinces were organized in the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site.

The students of ASPnet schools actively participate in creative art competitions, painting exhibitions and performing arts performances, which are organized annually. The ASPnet community in Mongolia is frequently involved in lectures, trainings and workshops on a wide range of topics such as tradition and culture, human rights, laws and regulations, health, ecology and media education. As a whole, the ASPnet is recognized as an effective tool for reaching SDG4, especially target 4.7 on ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Activities of ASPnet schools are supported by enthusiastic scholars and teachers, for example by Mr Tuvshintugs Ts, National Advisor of UNESCO's Clubs and Associations, and

National Coordinator of ASPnet Schools in Mongolia for 2010-2012, who worked diligently to promote ASPnet activities and was the author of the first guidebook for teachers and social workers in 2005.

ASPnet National Coordination in Mongolia recognizes that exchanging experiences, knowledge and good practices with schools, individuals and communities present many opportunities for ASPnet schools. The exchange programme of teachers and students between Mongolia and the Republic of Korea, which commenced in 2001, is a very good example of exchanging and sharing information on education, culture and traditions of different countries.

The ASPnet schools in Mongolia are making great efforts in disseminating innovative educational materials and promoting new teaching and learning approaches based on UNESCO's core values and principles. However, according to Dr Dorj T, the first National Coordinator of ASPnet in Mongolia, the ASPnet schools in the country have not reached their full potential yet due to limited resources. The current number of ASPnet schools in Mongolia is too low considering there are 820 schools in the country as of 2019. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the number of ASPnet schools in Mongolia while also upgrading the quality of education in the schools.

Biosphere Reserves Network

Biosphere Reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems which are internationally recognized within the framework of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. Mongolia boasts vast areas of land, a wide range of biodiversity and deep understanding of the interactions between social and ecological systems and its challenges, and thus has been participating in the UNESCO MAB Programme since 1978 and, from later on, in the MAB Programme's dynamic and interactive network of sites of excellence – the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Within the framework of the MAB Programme, the Great Gobi of Mongolia was recognized as a unique ecosystem in 1990. Following that the Bogd Khan Uul

was registered in the network in 1996,Uvs Nuur Basin in 1997, Hustai Nuruu in 2002, Dornod Mongol in 2005 and Mongol Daguur in 2007. Periodic review on Hustai Nuruu was conducted in 2015, on Bogd Khan Uul and Uvs Nuur Basin in 2016 and on Dornod Mongol in 2017. All registered biosphere reserves in Mongolia are now playing a key role in the regional exchange of information and experience, and are contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Dr Bandi N, previous Director of Hustai Nuruu Biosphere Reserve, was awarded the Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management in 2015 for his outstanding efforts in international cooperation through sharing knowledge, exchanging experiences, building capacity and promoting best practices.

Mongolia is an active participant in building ecosystem-specific networks on the international, regional and sub-regional levels within the MAB Programme and contributing **inputs to the programme's activities**. In 1997, the MNCU organized the fifth, in 2003 the eighth, in 2007 the tenth, and in 2013 the thirteenth regular session of the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network at the sacred Bogdkhan Uul mountain, national park Hustai Nuruu mountain, national park Gorkhi-Terelj and Ulaanbaatar city, respectively.

As the number of sites in the Global UNESCO Geoparks Network approaches 161 in 44 countries, Mongolia aims to participate in the Global Geoparks Programme and is currently researching the possibilities of establishing a national geopark in Mongolia.

World Heritage Network

Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List are cultural, natural or mixed properties recognized by the World Heritage Committee as sites of outstanding universal value. The World Heritage Committee has recognized the following sites in Mongolia as cultural sites: in 2004, the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape, in 2011, the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai, and in 2015, the Great Burkhan Khaldun Mountain and its surrounding sacred landscape. It has

recognized the following sites in Mongolia as natural sites: in 2003, the Uvs Nuur Basin and in 2017, the Landscapes of Dauria.

Mongolia prepared a National Tentative List consisting of 12 properties which was approved by the World Heritage Committee. The 12 properties are as follows: Amarbayasgalant Monastery and its Surrounding Sacred Cultural Landscape (19/12/2014), Archaeological Site at Khuduu Aral and Surrounding Cultural Landscape (19/12/2014), Baldan Bereeven Monastery and its Sacred Surroundings (19/12/2014), Cretaceous Dinosaur Fossil Sites in the Mongolian Gobi (19/12/2014), Deer Stone Monuments, the Heart of Bronze Age Culture (19/12/2014), Desert Landscapes of the Mongolian Great Gobi (19/12/2014), Eastern Mongolian Steppes (19/12/2014), Funeral Sites of the Xiongnu Elite (19/12/2014), Highlands of Mongol Altai (19/12/2014), Petroglyphic Complexes in the Mongolian Gobi (19/12/2014), Sacred Binder Mountain and its Associated Cultural Heritage Sites (19/12/2014), Sacred Mountains of Mongolia (23/11/2015).

Other networks

- Mongolia is a participant in the UNESCO Silk Roads Programme and thus is a member of the International Network for the Silk Roads Programme, which was established by UNESCO for the designated focal points in Member States.
- In 1987, representatives of 36 countries and 4 international organizations, including a representative of the Director General of UNESCO, decided to establish the International Association for Mongol Studies (IAMS)³⁴ to foster scholarly research on Mongol studies at the international level and to promote the national history, culture, customs and traditions of Mongolia and the Mongolian people through the research. The IAMS considers it its task to help **increase Mongolia's international prestige and promote the visibility of the country** by many different means; mainly through the creation of networks and by supporting Mongol Study centers overseas, foreign scholars in the

³⁴ Website <http://iams.org.mn/en/static.php?sid=20#>

field of Mongolian studies and young Mongolists. The IAMS Secretariat is located in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

- Within the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, Mongolia has recently established a UNESCO Chair on Environmental Sciences in Eastern Central Asia at the Institute of Geography and Geoecology, the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.
- Most recently, the Mongolian National Media Information Literacy Network was established in 2020. The main goal of the national network is to contribute to the development of media and information literacy in Mongolia, enhance the knowledge, understanding and attitudes of decision-makers and the public, and promote cooperation between stakeholders in influencing policy decisions.
- To date Mongolia has joined 10 UNESCO Conventions³⁵, of which 5 are related to the culture sector. In recent years, the MNCU has carried out studies on joining the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (Rome, 1995) and UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications.

2.3 RESEARCHING THE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING CURRENT PROGRAMMES

Throughout the history of the MNCU, limited human resources has been the most prevalent and consistent challenge in implementing activities. During the earlier **years of the MNCU's establishment, UNESCO related activities were coordinated**

³⁵ The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention (1954), Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989), Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), Fighting against the illicit trafficking of cultural property (1970), Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific(1983), Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (1971), Convention on Technical and Vocational Education(1989), Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) and International Convention against Doping in Sport (2005).

by a single enthusiastic official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Mongolia's relationship with international organizations and foreign countries was not as extensive as it is in the present due to its centrally planned economy. Presently, although Mongolia has already joined five cultural conventions, there is only one programme specialist in charge of the culture sector at MNCU who coordinates activities aimed at implementing the conventions. The same goes for all fields of **UNESCO's competence, including the education sector, with only one programme specialist** working at the MNCU regardless of the importance and multifaceted nature of the sector.

Another challenge is the financing for activities, including translations. Just as the National Commissions for UNESCO in other Member States translate materials to and from their languages, the MNCU translates all UNESCO materials in English into Mongolian, and vice versa. This requires a great deal of **human and financial resources, which the MNCU is lacking. As the MNCU's** budget is fully allocated from the state budget and mainly consists of salaries for the staff, there is a ceiling on how many projects the MNCU can implement in a year. Furthermore, due to the salaries of the MNCU staff being on the lower end of the scale with very small increases depending on years of experience, the average turnover rate is high, with staff moving every 2-3 years. Insufficient financial and human resources may also be a challenge faced by the Administrations for the World Heritage Sites and National Committees for UNESCO Programmes.

Despite these challenges, the MNCU works ardently and efficiently in implementing projects and programmes. The success of the MNCU can be partially attributed to the valuable efforts made by experts, especially in the culture sector, such as Dr Urtnasan N, who was the Secretary General of the MNCU in 2002-2010. Dr Urtnasan initiated most of the Mongolian nominations now inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding,

the World Heritage List, and the Memory of the World Registry³⁶. During his term in office, Mongolia joined the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). The role of the Secretary General of MNCU is undeniably an important one, and it should be noted that the efforts of the current Secretary General³⁷ have been key in strengthening and vitalizing **the MNCU's activities in all five sectors of UNESCO's mandate**.

In regard to joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and establishing national geoparks in Mongolia, despite the fact that initial introductions have been made to the relevant authorities, these activities have stalled due to insufficient knowledge, awareness and necessary preparations. Nevertheless, the MNCU will continue to expand its activities and further strengthen its collaboration with UNESCO and its field offices, Category 2 Centers, National Commissions for UNESCO and other partners, including but not limited to the Japan Funds-in-Trust, Korea Funds-in-Trust, The Trust Funds of Monaco and the SIDA.

3. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF THE MNCU

3.1 FUTURE PRIORITIES OF THE MNCU

Future priorities of the MNCU will be determined by the deep and longstanding **commitment to UNESCO's objectives of promoting cooperation**³⁸ in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information, and will be in line with the

³⁶ Urtnasan N., Bright years: Memoirs on working in the MNCU, pp. 165-185, *UNESCO and Mongolia: 55 Years of Partnership*, Recollections and notes of the history-makers, 246 pages, issued by the MNCU, Editors: Tuvshintugs Ts and Batbold Sh, Advisor: Uyanga S., 2017, Ulaanbaatar

³⁷ Uyanga S.(Ms), career diplomat, Secretary-General of the MNCU since 2016, has been the initiator of several proposals, including the production and publication of two books, *The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO*, published by MNCU, editors S.Uyanga, Sh.Batbold, 76 pages, 2017, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and *UNESCO and Mongolia: 55 Years of Partnership*, Recollections and notes of the history-makers, issued by the MNCU, Editors: Tuvshintugs Ts and Batbold Sh, Advisor: Uyanga S., 246 pages, 2017, Ulaanbaatar, for which she was editor and advisor.

³⁸ As exemplified in the MOU on cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO during 2016-2021, signed by Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO and Mr M. Batsaikhan, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Mongolia to UNESCO

objectives reflected in Mongolia's long-term development policy document "Vision 2050"³⁹, the Action Plan of the Government⁴⁰ for 2020-2024, the 5-year guidelines for the development of Mongolia⁴¹ in 2021-2025, National Programs on sectoral developments and other relevant policy documents.

In line with the above, the following future priorities have been established.

Education

Promotion of education as a fundamental right, in the context of the Education-2030 framework, SDG 4 and related targets, and policy priorities articulated in relevant national policy documents, with the main focus on technical assistance, policy advice and dialogue, capacity building, standard setting and promoting best practices in education.

- To create equal opportunities for everyone to receive quality education and strengthen the system of inclusion; to ensure that early childhood education institutions have training programmes that respect Mongolian upbringing, enriched with Mongolian history, language, culture, customs, patriotism, national heritage, justice, attitudes and internationally recognized content. To raise the quality of general education up to world standards by using the PISA assessment and strengthening the national quality assessment system. To **support the implementation of the national "Skilled Teachers, Quality Education" programme, introduction of professional standards, and development of e-learning platforms, programmes and content to support lifelong learning for people of all ages.** The MNCU will provide support for

³⁹ Vision 2050, Mongolia's long-term development policy <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/11057?lawid=15406>, adopted by Resolution # 52, 11 May, 2020, of the State Great Khural (Parliament of Mongolia). The same resolution annulled the Concept of Sustainable Development of Mongolia 2030 adopted earlier in 2016.

⁴⁰ Action Plan of the Government for 2020-2024 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15586> approved by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution # 24, 28 August 2020. <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/11219?lawid=15586>

⁴¹ Draft of The 5-year guidelines for the development of Mongolia in 2021-2025 submitted to the State Great Khural (Parliament of Mongolia) on approval <https://montsame.mn/mn/read/233716>

legal reforms which will be gradually implemented to create internationally competitive educational programmes⁴².

- To strengthen the institutional capacity and policy frameworks to enhance and enable access to inclusive education at all levels; to create inclusive learning opportunities for persons with disabilities⁴³ and sensitize and build the capacity of teachers and school managers.
- To strengthen technical and vocational education and training (TVET) policies and programmes, introduce and implement innovative approaches so as to transform TVET, and improve capacities to support successful school-to-work transitions.

Natural Sciences

Strengthening of science, technology and innovation (STI) systems and policies and promotion of scientific cooperation on critical challenges to sustainable development.

- To support the establishment of joint national centers of research institutions and universities, mobilization of resources, and enhancement of the economic, social and scientific efficiency of research. To optimize research and analysis in science, technology and innovation, increase the capacity of researchers, **and support stakeholders' work on improving the competitiveness of the sector** by establishing integrated, specialized, and open laboratories⁴⁴.

⁴² Education, Action Plan of the Government for 2020-2024
<https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15586> approved by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution # 24, 28 August 2020.

<https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/11219?lawid=15586>

⁴³ National Development Support Programme on Rights and Participation of Persons with Disabilities adopted by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution # 321 on 29 November 2017
<https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/8134?lawid=13031>

⁴⁴ Science and Technology, Action Plan of the Government for 2020-2024
<https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15586> approved by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution # 24, 28 August 2020.
<https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/11219?lawid=15586>

- To support the development of the foundation and infrastructure of the national innovation system, strengthen human resources, and develop cooperation on scientific and industrial innovation⁴⁵.
- To increase Mongolia's involvement in UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, particularly in areas of mountain ecosystems and drylands, and work towards adding new sites to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). To initiate activities on preparing for the establishment of national geoparks in Mongolia.
- To increase Mongolia's involvement in UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP), promote sustainable use of water resources, and enhance public understanding of water education. To continue on-going collaboration with UNESCO on integrated water resources management, water and sanitation, transboundary water resources, water quality, water pollution and climate change adaptation.

Social and Human Sciences

Support for inclusive social development, fostering of intercultural dialogue for the rapprochement of cultures, and promotion of ethical principles.

- **To enhance Mongolia's participation in UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme**, including through the organization of MOST Schools to enhance the capacities of researchers and decision-makers to transfer knowledge into action, and by strengthening the MOST National Committee.
- To support youth empowerment and to strengthen institutional capacities for inclusive development, policy-oriented research and policy enhancement for the transition from youth to adulthood in line with the National Youth

⁴⁵ Provision 2.2, National Innovation System Development Programme approved by the Government of Mongolia, resolution # 33 on 29 January 2020
<https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/10577?lawid=15041>

Development Programme⁴⁶. To promote human rights and gender equality, and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with the National Development Support Programme on Rights and Participation of Persons with Disabilities⁴⁷.

- To promote active participation in the activities of UNESCO's programmes in the sector, including the Silk Roads Programme and the Bioethics Programme.
- To develop physical education and sports activities in line with provisions specified in the National Programme on Development of Physical Education and Sports⁴⁸, and to ensure the implementation of the International Convention against Doping in Sport and raise public awareness of anti-doping in sports.

Culture

Harnessing the potential of culture to build open, inclusive and pluralistic societies by safeguarding heritage, strengthening creative industries and encouraging cultural pluralism as culture in its various manifestations is an enabler of social and economic progress and a driving force of sustainable development.

⁴⁶ National Youth Development Programme adopted by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution #171 on 1 May 2019 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/9794?lawid=14379>

⁴⁷ National Development Support Programme on Rights and Participation of Persons with Disabilities adopted by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution #321 on 29 November 2017 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/8134?lawid=13031>

⁴⁸ To increase access to physical education and sports activities and physical education in accordance with the interests and real needs of the target population; To develop a hierarchical system of sports training, competitions and games, to improve cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations, to specialize human resources, to increase the competitiveness of athletes at the Olympic, continental and world levels, and to improve the ethical responsibility of athletes and coaches; To establish a basic system for the development of physical culture and sports activities based on sports science, medical research, analysis and experiments; To have some state functions of providing physical culture and sports services performed by a sports association recognized by the International Sports Association, with aimag (province), capital city and district branches, and an accredited sports club; Improve financial management of physical culture and sports and increase non-budget funding through tax incentives, as specified in Provision 2.2., Article 2 of the National Programme on Development of Physical Education and Sports approved by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution #335 on 21 August 2019 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/10093?lawid=14629>

- To support the conservation and management of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and the Tentative List, in addition to other cultural and natural properties, through the implementation of capacity-building initiatives and the periodic reporting process within the framework of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.
- To strengthen the capacities of the Mongolian National Committee for World Heritage, relevant governmental authorities and local experts in the preparation of nominations to the World Heritage List for natural, cultural and mixed properties.
- To enhance capacities to protect culture in emergencies and to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural objects by supporting the revision of national laws, assisting governmental authorities in the establishment of a National Committee for the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, providing training on the protection and preservation of movable cultural heritage and promoting knowledge sharing in this field.
- To support the development of Mongolian museums, in particular the Training and Methodology Centre of the Mongolian National Museum, by building the capacity of museum professionals, national experts, restorers and guides.
- To improve the policy and legal environment for intangible cultural heritage and to ensure the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. To raise the quality of research, registration and documentation processes relating to intangible cultural heritage to international standards. To increase public knowledge and understanding of intangible cultural heritage and foster intersectoral cooperation. To provide capacity-building training for intangible cultural heritage specialists and bearers⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ Provision 2.2, National Programme for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution #69 on 13 February 2019 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/9343?lawid=14097>

- To promote research on different elements of intangible cultural heritage and the implementation of safeguarding measures, with a view to enhancing community-based inventorying processes and creating a database on intangible cultural heritage elements in need of urgent safeguarding according to the National Programme for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage⁵⁰, the National Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and National List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding⁵¹.
- To strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders of the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions with a view to enabling the participation of Mongolia in the international cooperation mechanisms of the Convention, in addition to facilitating information-sharing through the periodic reporting process.
- To support the sustainable development of cultural and creative industries through capacity-building programmes and technical assistance missions with a focus on participatory, evidence-based and transparent policy-making for culture, the mapping of creative industries and capacity building on cultural statistics and indicators.
- To raise awareness among children and youth about arts and culture through the implementation of educational programmes on heritage and creativity.
- To register, protect, restore and promote stone cultural heritage, and create new tourism products and services based on stone cultural heritage⁵².

⁵⁰ National Programme for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution #69 on 13 February 2019 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/9343?lawid=14097>

⁵¹ "National Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage", which includes 279 elements in 7 domains, and the "National List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding", which includes 83 elements in 7 domains, approved by the Education, Culture, Science and Sports Minister's Order # A/759 dated 29 November 2019

⁵² Provision 2.2, Article 2, Stone Heritage National Program, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/9344?lawid=14098>

Communication and Information

Promotion of the free flow of ideas by word and image, by enhancing mechanisms for accessing knowledge and information (including ICT), strengthening media development, and promoting freedom of expression.

- To increase Mongolia's involvement in UNESCO's Information for All Programme (IFAP) and International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), and to identify projects and programmes to be implemented within these programmes on the local, national and sub-regional levels.
- To strengthen capacities of press and media personnel and the staff of information and communication organizations and to support the introduction of advanced technologies.
- To continue raising awareness of, enhancing access to, and preservation of documentary heritage, particularly endangered documentary heritage, through continued participation in the UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme, as well as to strengthen research and capacity building.
- To enhance the local capacity for information and communication technology use in rural and remote areas, as well as among ethnic minorities.
- To collaborate in the promotion of equal and equitable access to information and knowledge, including for persons with disabilities, through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as enhanced capacities to use such technologies.
- To improve basic knowledge and skills in public communication and information technology⁵³.

⁵³ "E-Mongolia" - government emergency service, Chapter Four. Governance Policy, Action Plan of the Government for 2020-2024 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15586> approved by the

Intersectoral Collaboration

Promote inclusive policies for sustainable development, and address cross-cutting issues within an enriched framework of mutually reinforcing contributions from various disciplines, competencies and specialities.

- To elaborate and implement projects with objectives in line with Objective 1.1. **“to build national pride, strengthen patriotism and unity through statehood traditions, historical and cultural monuments, literature and works of art” of Mongolia's long-term development policy “Vision 2050”⁵⁴;**
- To support research and restoration of nomadic life styles as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), including traditions, songs, poetry and tales which are orally transmitted from ancestors to the next generation. To support creation of ICH products in the tourist industry and provide technical assistance (including methodologies) for the development of tourism products in line with objectives reflected in the National Programme for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage⁵⁵;
- To improve the quality of education at all levels, support lifelong learning, promote healthy lifestyles, increase youth participation in sustainable development, and create a youth-friendly, safe environment that enables growth and development⁵⁶.
- To support the development of sustainable tourism based on natural, historical and cultural heritage and the enhancement of tourism products, services, quality and standards. To support the introduction of technological

Government of Mongolia, Resolution # 24, 28 August 2020.

<https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/11219?lawid=15586>

⁵⁴ Vision 2050 Mongolia's long-term development policy <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/11057?lawid=15406>, adopted by Resolution # 52, 11 May, 2020 of the State Great Khural (Parliament of Mongolia).

⁵⁵ National Programme for the protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution #69 on 13 February 2019 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/9343?lawid=14097>

⁵⁶ Provision 4.1, Article 4, National Youth Development Programme adopted by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution #171 on 1 May 2019 <https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/9794?lawid=14379>

advances within the framework of the “e-Mongolia” national programme and to build the capacity of the personnel in the sector⁵⁷.

In conclusion, Mongolia fully remains committed to UNESCO and its ideology and the MNCU will strive to contribute further to the achievement of the SDGs and to the promotion of peace through international and regional cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, and the CI sector.

3.2 IDENTIFYING FUTURE COMMON CHALLENGES IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon announcing the COVID-19 pandemic as an emergency situation, the Government of Mongolia and the State Emergency Commission decided to close all schools and kindergartens until 1 June 2020, which is the end of the school year, to prevent the spread of the coronavirus infection.

Member States have developed various distance learning solutions to ensure education continuity such as online learning, radio and television and take-home packages. As utilization of TV channels was the first available option to continue the teaching and learning process in Mongolia, lessons were taught on TV to students from Grade 1-12, and preschool/kindergarten children. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports, in collaboration with the Department of Communications and Information Technology, provided instructions to every student on how to access online learning materials using their mobile devices at www.econtent.mn.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports, and the Mongolian Television Association, made joint efforts to regulate broadcasting hours for TV lessons to enhance convenience and accessibility of these lessons for families

⁵⁷ Tourism, Action Plan of the Government for 2020-2024
<https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15586> approved by the Government of Mongolia, Resolution # 24, 28 August 2020.
<https://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/details/11219?lawid=15586>

with more than 2 children⁵⁸. However, a joint survey conducted by educational institutions found that only 46% of students watch TV regularly.

Despite the success of adapting and implementing distance learning solutions during the pandemic, countries were not fully prepared for the long-term implementation of those solutions. In Mongolia, for instance, the legal environment and infrastructure for e-learning was not sufficient. Hence, the Government of Mongolia included "***creation of an e-learning platform, and development and preparation of e-content***" in its **Action Plan for 2020-2024**, which was approved on 24 August 2020. This includes the exploration of developing e-learning and supporting households without access to television and internet. As there are still a large number of students, especially children from vulnerable and disadvantaged households, in the region who do not have access to Wi-Fi, television, or mobile devices, it is necessary to find short and long-term solutions to improve accessibility and inclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only had an impact on education but also on gender-based violence (GBV). This is a phenomenon that is rooted in gender inequality and has been considered one of the most notable human rights violations in the world both before and during the pandemic. Although the victims can be individuals of any gender, the majority of victims are women and girls. Specifically, the Asian-Pacific region presents some of the poorest development for women and girls and they are frequently subject to violence and abuse. The pandemic has exacerbated the situation, as individuals have been required to stay at home to minimize community transmission. Consequently, social isolation has caused an exponential rise in GBV.

In the natural sciences sector, a challenge in the region is the insufficient knowledge and experience sharing on UNESCO Global Geoparks. East and Southeast Asia consists of 16 countries. There is currently a total of 64 UNESCO Global Geoparks in the East and Southeast Asian region. However, there are countries in the region with no existing geoparks. As a UNESCO Global Geopark

⁵⁸ <https://ikon.mn/n/1s6k>

is not only about cooperation with the local people living in the area, but also about cooperating with other UNESCO Global Geoparks through global and regional networks in order to learn from each other and collectively improve the geoparks, it is crucial for countries in East and Southeast Asia without geoparks to learn from the holistic experiences in governance, protection, and development from countries in the region that already have geoparks.

Faced with the growing danger of loss of valuable archival and library collections **and material that are important to the world's legacy of knowledge, identity and the history of humankind**, it is becoming more and more necessary to increase efforts to preserve and digitize documentary heritage. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the dire reality of the digital divide, it is crucial to build the capacities of individuals and institutions responsible for documentary heritage, especially through regional cooperation.

The region of East and Southeast Asia is rich with cultural heritage built in stone that has high ecological and economic value in addition to its cultural and historical importance. This stone heritage is slowly but inexorably disappearing without proper preservation and safeguarding measures in place. However, in order to commence preservation and restoration activities, countries must first identify and document the stone heritage located within their territories. In this regard, UNESCO-designated sites provide an appropriate entry point for initial cooperation on mapping the stone heritage in the region.

3.3 FORMULATING A FIRST DRAFT OF PROPOSALS / SUGGESTIONS FOR THE JOINT PROJECT

The joint project of National Commission for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia could be based on the following suggestions:

Education Sector

Implement short and long-term solutions to strengthen inclusive, equitable delivery of educational services to all children and youth,

including those who are disadvantaged, during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond

Brief background

Distance learning is a new experience for Mongolia. The content in the current TV-based programme was developed rapidly for the crisis as a stop-gap measure. Given the protracted nature of the crisis, the current content is of limited diversity. Therefore, there is a need to study how we can deliver critical education content using creative methodologies to reach vulnerable children such as children without internet and TV access, or **with special needs, from herders' families, or ethnic minorities.**

Main activities proposed:

- (1) Exchange of experiences, information and best practices
- (2) Conducting a situation analysis
- (3) Adjusting existing and additional content to make it accessible to children **without internet and TV access, or with special needs, or from herders' families and ethnic minorities**
- (4) Distribution of offline (hardcopy) content to those without access to TV or with special needs

Natural Sciences Sector

Establishment of an East and Southeast Asian Geoparks Network (Long-term)

Brief background

East and Southeast Asia consists of 16 countries. As of September 2020, there are a total of 64 UNESCO Global Geoparks in the East and Southeast Asia. In addition to the countries of the region that already have UNESCO Global Geoparks, there are countries that are planning to nominate and establish Global

Geoparks. Creating a sub-regional network would help both existing and aspiring geoparks of the region to exchange their experiences and support and learn from each other.

Main activities proposed:

- (1) Cooperation between the Global Geoparks of the countries of East and Southeast Asia
- (2) Capacity-building activities such as training workshops and study tours between the Global Geoparks of the region
- (3) Exchange of experiences, information and best practices
- (4) Creation of a common website for promotion and publications of the member countries
- (5) Implementation of joint projects with regard to the development of eco- and geo-tourism in the region.

Social and Human Sciences Sector

Project to enhance regional cooperation on mitigating the surge in gender-based violence related to the COVID-19 pandemic

Brief background

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. GBV is violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience GBV but the majority of the victims are women and girls.

The Asia-Pacific region presents some of the poorest development indicators for women and girls and socially excluded and marginalized populations. Women and girls are frequently subject to violence and abuse; however, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has led to an exponential increase in GBV.

A key obstacle to eliminating GBV and developing gender sensitive policies and

programmes is the lack of best practices, international cooperation and reliable national data on this subject.

In line with UNESCO's goal to construct inclusive and sustainable societies by promoting gender equality and non-violence, the project could focus on the activities outlined below.

Main activities proposed:

- (1) Conducting research and assessment of GBV in national contexts, including but not limited to best practices on response measures and prevention, legal frameworks that address GBV and any existing gaps in policy documents with the aim of establishing a sub-regional/regional clearing house.
- (2) Organizing a series of trainings on the following:
 - a. For all stakeholders: Preventing and responding to GBV,
 - b. For media personnel and the general public: Addressing and raising awareness about victims and survivors (including men and boys) of GBV and harassment,
 - c. For men and boys: Building the capacity of men and boys to be agents of change and champions of eliminating GBV and harassment,
 - d. For policymakers: Strengthening legal and policy frameworks, including but not limited to enhancing response services and lessening negative consequences for alerting the authorities,
 - e. For all stakeholders, especially women and girls: Increasing knowledge and awareness of opportunities to get help, and building resilience to overcome the stigma that follows GBV and harassment,
- (3) Organizing a sub-regional/regional conference to share experiences, information and best practices, and to enhance **stakeholders' cooperation** in identifying common issues and developing innovative, but effective solutions.
- (4) Launching a sub-regional/regional campaign to raise awareness of GBV, negate negative stereotypes, stigma, and biased representations, and

foster positive attitudes among the public in order to create a safe and welcoming environment for those affected by GBV and harassment.

- (5) Creating responsible citizens by taking a grassroots approach and implementing joint projects on instilling the values of peace and non-violence in children through education, and eliminating school-related gender-based violence.

Communication and Information Sector

Safeguarding, preserving, and facilitating access to documentary heritage in East and South East Asia

Brief background

The world's documentary heritage belongs to all, and should be fully preserved and protected for all and, with due recognition of cultural mores and practicalities, should be permanently accessible to all without hindrance. As the preservation of documents is an ongoing process, there is always a need take preventative actions to address the risks of losing important sources of information.

To this end, implementing a joint project on capacity building on preservation and digitization of documentary heritage would be highly beneficial for experts from memory institutions of East and East Asia.

Main activities proposed:

- (1) A workshop for relevant experts from memory institutions to better understand the UNESCO 2015 Recommendation Concerning the Preservation Of, and Access To, Documentary Heritage Including in Digital Form and relevant Guidelines;
- (2) Capacity building on digitization of documentary heritage;
- (3) A consultative meeting on general principles, legal issues, pros and cons in planning a digitization program, and exchange of experience and best practices.

Culture Sector

Promoting the creative industries through regional cooperation on the capacity building of artists and craftsmen (Medium-term)

Brief background

The term 'creative industry' is still new for Mongolian artists and small and medium enterprises. Therefore, it is vital to work on capacity building and improving knowledge of the significance of the creative industries among artists, craftsmen, and professionals in small and medium enterprises. Creative industries contribute to the national and regional economy. Therefore, sharing experiences on how to develop the creative industries in line with the Sustainable Development Goals among artists, craftsmen, and professionals in small and medium enterprises at regional level could promote cultural aspects in all fields.

Main activities proposed:

- (1) Capacity building activities such as training workshops and study tours between countries or at regional level;
- (2) Training on creative industries and sustainable development;
- (3) Exchange of experiences and best practices.

Mapping of the stone heritage of UNESCO-designated sites in East and Southeast Asia (Long-term)

Brief background

There is a variety of stone heritage at the UNESCO-designated sites in East and Southeast Asia, including stone monuments, sculptures, beautiful rock formations, ancient tombs and tools, castles and bridges. These are an important part of cultural, natural and geological heritage and can be used as a basis for thematic tourism and ecotourism. Establishing regional cooperation and taking action to safeguard and manage the stone heritage would contribute significantly

to the implementation of a number of UNESCO programmes and conventions, such as the WHC, MAB and IGGP.

Main activities proposed:

- (1) To develop a catalogue of the stone heritage of UNESCO designated sites in East and Southeast Asia
- (2) To make a map of the stone heritage of UNESCO designated sites in East and Southeast Asia
- (3) To produce documentation on the stone heritage of UNESCO designated sites in East and Southeast Asia
- (4) To develop a trail for eco- and thematic tourism using the significant stone heritage of the region.
- (5) To create a common website for promotion of the stone heritage of the region.

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Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO

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Ms. Hsu Myat Sandar



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Myanmar
National Commission
For UNESCO

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FOREWORD



The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2020, a year in which a number of national commissions in this region emerged to work with UNESCO.

Each Member State has developed its own way of operating its National Commission, as provided for in UNESCO's Constitution. It is important that each Member State's National Commission should reflect its particular political, legal, and administrative context.

Although the Myanmar National Commission will maintain and respect the principle of the diversity of National Commissions, it will review the long history of the commission in terms of achievements and shortcomings and is ready to boost cooperation with other agencies and commission offices across the world.

As one knows, we are on the cusp of a new world mostly due to COVID-19 uncertainties, and will need new principles and new types of collaboration as forced upon us by the challenges we have faced during these days. However, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is planning to review its structure and status to be able to work more effectively and more capably. We will also be looking for ways of engaging more closely with the larger UNESCO family, partners and networks in their countries, with a view to providing advice, guidance and, as appropriate, coordination and support.

Dr. Kyi SHWIN
Secretary-General
Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO

1. INTRODUCTION

The “Preliminary Survey for a Joint Project among National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia” is the project composed by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO with the collaboration of nine other National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia. The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO participated in this preliminary survey under the guidance of Dr. Kyi Shwin, the Secretary-General of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO. Since the transition to democracy since 2010, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO has engaged and contributed more in **fulfilling UNESCO’s objectives and broadening its range of influence and promoting the execution of UNESCO’s programmes.**

By conducting this survey, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO hopes to define its unique identity and find sustainable solutions to existing concerns and challenges through the process of data collection and the analysis of its history.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data in this survey are collected by the following ways:

(1) Telephone interviews

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers interviewed the authorities from their respective departments via telephone interviews and collected data.

(2) Personal interviews

Personal interviews were done by interviewing the current Secretary-General, previous Secretary-General, and senior programme officer from the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO.

(3) Observation

Data are also collected from the office of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO, National Archives Department, and information from the internet.

3. PROFILE OF THE MYANMAR NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

3.1 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Chairman of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Minister of Education. The Secretary-General is Dr. Kyi Shwin, Rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages. Five faculty members of Yangon University of Foreign Languages are working for the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO. The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is under the Ministry of Education (MOE), in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Religious and Cultural Affairs (MORCA), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), and UNESCO Myanmar.

3.2 LEGAL STATUS AND FUNCTION

The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is a government organization. The office of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is the office of the respective Secretaries-General. Secretaries-General are usually rectors of universities, while the staff are government officials from respective universities.

The function of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is to be involved **in Myanmar UNESCO's activities for the progression of education, culture, communication and information.** In order to do so, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO contributes to the maintenance of peace and security **and the common welfare of mankind by joining with Myanmar UNESCO's activities.** These activities intend to advance the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples and provide a fresh impulse to education and culture.

For this purpose, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO mainly cooperates with the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Religious and Cultural Affairs (MORCA), Ministry of Natural

Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), and UNESCO Myanmar. Moreover, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO also cooperates with other National Commissions in joint studies/projects on matters of interest to UNESCO.

3.3 BUDGET STRUCTURE

There is no specific budget structure for the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO. The office of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is currently centered in Yangon University of Foreign Languages with the supervision of the Rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages and the expenses for regular or common meetings are funded by Yangon University of Foreign Languages. On the other hand, major expenses such as annual fees for UNESCO membership are financed by the Department of Higher Education. For Special Projects, the expense is supported by the Ministry of Education.

4. PAST: CHRONOLOGY OF THE MYANMAR NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MYANMAR NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Myanmar became a member of UNESCO on 27 June 1949. After one year of membership in UNESCO, the constitution of the Union of Burma National Commission for UNESCO was formed on 10 November, 1950 by the Ministry of Education, Union of Burma according to Letter Number 10: DHE – U (HTA – 2) 92. The name was later changed to the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO (MNCU) on 18 June 1989.

4.2 THE BIRTH OF THE MYANMAR NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The Union of Burma National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was formed by the President of the Union of

Burma in fulfilment of Article VII of the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to advise the Ministry of Education on the Union of Burma participation in UNESCO on 10 November, 1950 with the following objectives:

- a. to advise the Government of the Union of Burma in matters relating to UNESCO and in all matters referred to the National Commission by the Ministry of Education;
- b. to act in a consultative capacity with regard to the appointment of the Union of Burma delegates to the General Conferences of UNESCO;
- c. to advise the delegations of the Union of Burma to the General Conferences of UNESCO with regard to the activities of the latter;
- d. to serve as an agency of liaison with organizations, institutions and individuals in the Union of Burma which are interested in matters relating to the activities of UNESCO; and
- e. to promote an understanding of the general objectives of UNESCO on the part of the people of the Union of Burma.

The National Commission was composed of the Minister of Education who would *ex-officio* be the Chairman and not more than fifty-four other members, being citizens of the Union of Burma, who were appointed by the President of the Union of Burma. The term of membership in the National Commission was three years, but members could serve more than two consecutive terms. The National Commission appointed three sub-Commissions from among its members, one each for education, science and culture. In the selection of the members of each Sub-Commission, due account was to be taken of the professional skill and experience of the individual members of the National Commission.

The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is a government organization under the Ministry of Education, Myanmar. The chairman is usually the Minister for Education. At first, the Secretary-General was the director of the Department of State Scholars, Ministry of Education. The office of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is the office of the respective Secretaries-General. Secretaries-General are usually the rectors of universities, while the staff are government officials from respective universities. The rectors of Yangon Institute

of Education became Secretaries-General until 2006. The office of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO then moved to Yangon University of Foreign Languages when the late Dr. Myo Myint, Rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages, acted as Secretary-General from 2006 to 2011. During 2011 to 2015, Dr. Lwin Lwin Soe, former Rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages, took the position of Secretary-General. Dr. Kyi Shwin, current Rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages, has the role of Secretary-General of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO.

4.3. MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS

4.3.1 MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS: 1950s

A UNESCO Education Mission to Burma took place in 1950, arriving in Rangoon on 17 December 1950. Three Burmese Educationists were appointed by the Government as consultants and advisors to the mission: U Kaung, Assistant Director of Public Instruction, Professor U Ba, Dean of Education, University of Rangoon and U Tun Aung, Special Officer for Compulsory Primary Education Pilot Project. The report was a comprehensive one written with much knowledge, wisdom, sympathy and understanding. Many of its recommendations have been implemented through the Pyidawtha Educational Plan.

A Study and Information Seminar was held in Tokyo from the 6th to the 27th of October 1953 and U Kaung, Director of Public Instruction, Burma was appointed as Director of the Seminar.

The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was signed at The Hague, Netherlands, on 14 May 1954 and entered into force on 7 August 1956. On 10 February 1956, Myanmar ratified the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention and Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

4.3.2 MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS: 1960s

A scientist from Myanmar attended the Regional Workshop held in Bangkok, Thailand, of UNESCO/UNICEF – Assisted Projects in Science Education in Asia in 1968. Thanks to a group of volunteers of the Education Department, a literacy campaign in Burma was initiated in 1964. It was in 1966 that the campaign was centrally organised. The basic principle and strategy of the campaign adopted by the Central Literacy Committee was based on the characteristics of mass movement with community participation using local resources on a voluntary basis in a selected region throughout the year. In 1969, the Meiktila district in central Burma was chosen as a pilot project area.

4.3.3 MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS: 1970s

In 1970, the literacy campaign initiated in 1964 was extended to two more districts – Sagaing and Kyaukse. In 1971, it was further extended to four more districts – Shwebo, Monywa, Myingan, and Magwe. The notable recognition of **Burma's literacy campaign resulted in the awarding of the 'Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Prize' for 1971 to Burma by the international tribunal of UNESCO (Nyi Nyi, 1972)**. The literacy campaign was something that Burma could be proud of. In 1974, further literacy centres were expanded to include Kalaw, Ywagnan, Myaing, Kyonebyaw and Pegu.

The Union Minister, as a patron of the organizing committee, made a keynote speech which noted that Myanmar scored two international awards including the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Award in 1971, presented by UNESCO **for the country's** remarkable milestones in literacy movements through successive eras.

4.3.4 MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS: 1980s

The National Literacy Campaign of Burma, which was initiated in 1964, functioned from 1964 to 1988 with reports of the Campaign made annually to UNESCO. The Literacy Campaign of Myanmar was indeed a national undertaking carried out with national awareness, outlook, and commitment, and with zeal

and zest. As stated earlier, the campaign was launched in 1964 and by 1988, twenty-four years later, the statistics showed that over 490,000 volunteers had contributed their services and over 2.4 million illiterates had become literates.

The 1971 Literacy Award may be regarded as a symbol of victory of the citizens of Myanmar in their concerted efforts to eradicate illiteracy in the country, and figuratively, it may be said that Myanmar had been able to hoist the flag of conquest in her battle against illiteracy.

The Noma Literacy Prize was then awarded in 1983, presented by UNESCO for **the country's remarkable milestones in literacy movements through successive eras**. Since 1988, an adult literacy movement through the Non-formal Education Programme has been in progress, since when the adult literacy rate has been increased dramatically.

4.3.5 MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS: 1990s

On 29 April 1994, Myanmar obtained acceptance for the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The Tentative List of World Heritage in Myanmar was submitted on 4 October 1996 as follows:

(1) Bagan, (2) Wooden Monasteries of Konbaung Period: Ohn Don, Sala, Pakhangyi, Pakhanng, Legaing, Sagu, Shwe-Kyaung (Mandalay), (3) Ancient cities of Upper Myanmar: Innwa, Amarapura, Sagaing, Mingunm Mandalay, (4) Myauk-U Archaeological Area and Monuments, (5) Inle Lake, (6) Mon cities: Bago, Hanthawaddy. The other nominated Heritage Sites except Bagan and Inle Lake are still on the Tentative List for World Heritage status.

4.3.6 MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS: 2000s

4.3.6.1 OVERVIEW OF UNESCO'S CONVENTIONS AND MYANMAR STATUS OF RATIFICATION

Despite a richness and variety in cultural heritage properties, most

archaeological sites in Myanmar have been neglected or selectively politicised to foster the legitimisation of the military regime, and to serve its political ambitions. Nevertheless, following the renewed engagement with the international community and the United Nations (UN), in early 2013, a new National Cultural Central Committee was appointed in Myanmar under the auspices of the UNESCO to eventually ratify the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property on 5 September 2013 and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage on 7 May 2014.

Moreover, the accession to the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat was accepted on 17 November 2004. On 31 March 2010, Myanmar ratified the International Convention against Doping in Sport.

4.3.6.2 WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN MYANMAR

The admission, in June 2014, of the Pyu Ancient Cities to the UNESCO World Heritage List as Myanmar's first ever registered site was globally received as a strong signal rewarding the country for its efforts in the area of cultural heritage safeguarding. The ancient city of Bagan was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee held in Baku, Azerbaijan in July 2019.

Tentative List of World Heritage in Myanmar

The Tentative List of World Heritage in Myanmar was submitted on 25 February 2014 as follows: (1) Ayeyawady River Corridor, (2) Hkakabo Razi Landscape, (3) Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, (4) Natma Taung National Park, (5) Myeik Archipelago, (6) Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, (7) Taninthayi Forest Corridor. Two more Heritage Sites were added to the list on 6 December 2018, namely, (1) Pondaung anthropoid primates palaeontological sites, (2) Shwedagon Pagoda on Singuttara Hill.

Biosphere Reserves enlisted in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)

Inle Lake, the second largest lake in Myanmar, and Indawgyi Lake, the largest lake in Myanmar, were inscribed in 2015 and 2017 respectively to establish a scientific basis for the sustainable use and conservation of biological diversity, with the ultimate aim of improving the relationship between people and their environments.

UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)

The Secretary-General of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is also the National Coordinator for UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) Schools, of which there are 4 schools: (1) Elementary State Training College for Teachers (Mawlamyaing), (2) Elementary Teachers' Training Institution (Pathein), (3) Elementary Teachers' Training Institution (Kyaukphyu) and (4) Elementary Teachers' Training Institution (Meikhtila).

Memory of the World Register

Memory of the World Register items in Myanmar approved by UNESCO are as follows:

(1) Maha Lawkamarazein or Kuthodaw Inscription Shrines

The Kuthodaw Pagoda, known in Burmese as the Maha Lawka Marazein Paya, is listed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, valuable for its 729 marble stelae, each housed in a white-washed mini pagoda and inscribed with Theravāda Buddhist texts written in Pali, and known as the 'World's Biggest Book'. The inscriptions were approved by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova on June 18, 2013.

(2) The Golden Letter of the Burmese King Alaungphaya to King George II of Great Britain

In October 2015, the Golden Letter was added to UNESCO's Memory of the World

Register as a common heritage of Myanmar, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

(3) Myazedi Quadrilingual Stone Inscription

The Myazedi inscription, named after a nearby pagoda and also known as **Rajakumar's Stone Inscription for the name of person who inscribed it**, was inscribed as a UNESCO Memory of the World Register item in 2015.

(4) King Bayinnaung Bell Inscription

The inscriptions on the bell record the events of King Bayinnaung's reign in Myanmar, with 35 lines in the Mon language, five lines in the Pali language and 43 lines in the Myanmar language. It was submitted to the UNESCO Cultural Heritage List in May 2016 and all details about the inscription were verified and approved in 2017.

Memory of the World Programme

The 'Safeguarding the Documentary Heritage of Myanmar through the UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme' project began with a high-level coordination meeting in Yangon on 25 November 2016. The representatives for this project were from the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, the National Archive, the National Library, the Film Archive, the National Directorate of Historic Research, Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation, and the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO. The project included a series of national level training workshops on developing nominations to the Memory of the World registers, a national survey of documentary heritage, as well as a publication and accompanying exhibition on the country's rich documentary heritage.

On 30 May 2018, the Emerald Jungle (Mya Ga Naing), a silent film produced by A1 Film Production in 1934 in Myanmar and the oldest Burmese film in existence and the Anandacandra Stone Inscription, an importance evidence of the early history of Rakhine (especially from the late BCE to the eighth century CE) were entered on the Asia/Pacific Regional Register.

UNESCO Collaboration with the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO

UNESCO's presence in Myanmar dates back to Cyclone Nargis in 2008 when UNESCO Bangkok's Post-conflict post-disaster platform launched its Myanmar Education Recovery Programme to complement and support the Government's education recovery efforts. Since UNESCO established its project office in Myanmar in 2012, it has actively engaged in the fields of education, media development and cultural and natural heritage. Through this, and in collaboration with the National Commission for Myanmar, UNESCO Bangkok was able to develop programmes and take action in Myanmar.

The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO also participated in the Asian Regional Initiative for Climate Change Education (RICE) project in 2012. MNCU covered two topics: 'Nurturing youths to grow plants for Global Cooling' and 'Training youths to produce and use organic fertilizers to grow plants on barren land'. Moreover, a regional project named "Gender sensitive, flexible and alternative learning programmes in Lao PDR and Myanmar" was conducted in 2012 to develop a draft national curriculum for Non-formal Middle School Education (NFMSE) programme.

In August 2012, Ms. Irina Bokova undertook the first mission by a UNESCO Director-General to Myanmar. Her mission came at a historic time in the country's political and economic reform process. The Director-General was received by President Thein Sein in Nay Pyi Taw, capital of Myanmar. President Thein Sein requested UNESCO's assistance for education reform, TVET, higher education, literacy, teacher training, peace education, and cultural heritage – the last, notably, through capacity-building for the preparation of site nominations. The Director-General also met with the Foreign Minister and all cabinet ministers with links to UNESCO's areas of competence and responded to this call with a pledge of UNESCO's full support. While in Myanmar, Ms. Bokova also met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who received the 2002 UNESCO-Mandanjee Singh Prize for Tolerance and Non-Violence in February, 2012 and stressed the areas that were important in taking the country forward, including literacy, education reform, youth employment, cultural heritage, and the recognition of the culture

and language of ethnic minorities. Thanks to the development of close relations between UNESCO, the Government of Myanmar, and UN agencies, the UNESCO Project Office is now a trusted development partner in Myanmar.

In 2013, UNESCO and the Ministry of Education signed the official Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which reaffirmed Article 5 of the Agreement signed on 20 April 1954 between the UN, including UNESCO, and Myanmar. A milestone on **Myanmar's road to education reform was reached on 26 November 2013 as** UNESCO and the Ministry of Education convened a high-level consultation meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on key policy and legislative areas for reform, including education decentralization, national education legislation, quality assurance, and EMIS development. The meeting was organized under the auspices of the ongoing Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR), which UNESCO is supporting through its CapEFA programme in the thematic area of sector-wide policy and planning.

The Acting Union Minister of Education, Dr. Myo Myint, inaugurated the meeting, emphasizing that the Government of Myanmar had prioritized the development of a national education law, the decentralization of the system, and the formation of quality assurance mechanisms as it began to formulate its education sector costed plan. Dr. Myo Myint highlighted steps that the Ministry of Education had already taken towards education reform, including providing school grants and stipends, increasing the teacher workforce, building new schools, and undertaking the CESR.

According to Dr. Myo Myint, "Today's meeting represents a significant step in accelerating education reform and in improving the quality of education for the people of Myanmar." By using the lens of regional, comparative analysis and presentations from UNESCO experts, participants could weigh options for policy reform in Myanmar by drawing on best practices and lessons learned from other ASEAN countries. During the meeting, Mr. Sardar Umar Alam, Head of the UNESCO Yangon Office, commended the Ministry of Education on its commitment to education reform and noted the perfect timing of the meeting as priorities emerge from the recommendations of the first two phases of the CESR, and as

the Ministry of Education moves towards formulating its costed education sector plan.

Myanmar had joined in the 2012-2013 UNESCO Participation Programmes. The Programmes numbered six in total, namely:

- (1) Workshop on Professional Skills Development of Faculty Members of Myanmar at Yangon University of Foreign Languages and Mandalay University of Foreign Languages,
- (2) Capacity Building of Teachers of Journalism and Review of Journalism Courses at the Department of Journalism, National Management College,
- (3) Safeguarding Traditional Music and Songs of Chin Ethnic Nationals,
- (4) Strengthening Resilience of Schools through Capacity Building of Educational Personnel for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Education – Sittwe Township, Rakhine State,
- (5) Initiating Non-formal Middle School Education Programme for Out-of-school Children in Selected Townships in Myanmar, and
- (6) Capacity Building Training for Education Planners Focusing on Decentralized Educational Planning and Management.

The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO had contributed in training sessions, workshops and conferences such as Capacity Building Training for Educational Planners Focused on Decentralized Educational Planning and Management, Conference on Media Development in Myanmar, Review Workshop on the draft media laws at the Press Scrutiny and Registration Division Office, Yangon, Training Course on Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region 2012, etc. Furthermore, **“Strengthening the capacities of Myanmar for implementing the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage”** was conducted under the Ministry of Culture from 2014 to 2015 which was funded by Norway.

Four scholars from Myanmar participated in the UNESCO/Keizo Obuchi Fellowships Programme which was conducted from 2001 to 2015. In 2004, a young researcher won the MAB Young Scientist Awards that targets young

researchers carrying out interdisciplinary research in line with UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme (from 1989 to 2017, 8 applicants from Myanmar applied for this prize). Recently, the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize was awarded to 'United World Schools Myanmar' for its 'Providing Non-Burmese Speaking Out-of-School Children with Access to Education' programme on 1 September, 2020.

Myanmar has been elected to serve on the UNESCO Executive Board, representing the Asia-Pacific group (ASPAC). The elections for the Executive Board Member took place on 20 November 2019 during the 40th Session of the General Conference held from 12 to 27 November 2019 in Paris, France. Myanmar has been elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO for the 2019-2023 term, and received 142 votes in favor out of 180. It is the first time that Myanmar has been chosen to the Executive Board of UNESCO during the 70 years since its membership to the Organization in June 1949.

5. PRESENT: MAIN PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF MYANMAR NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

5.1 CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS OF THE MYANMAR NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The current areas of focus of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO are as follows:

Firstly, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO performs as a bridge between the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to UNESCO and the Myanmar Ministry of Education. UNESCO provides technical advice to the government of Myanmar in its efforts to safeguard and conserve the country's rich and diverse cultural and natural heritages within the framework of the conventions it has ratified.

Consultations regarding the ratification of the following conventions are currently

on-going:

- (1) Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 26 March 1999)
- (2) Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. (Paris, 2 November 2001)
- (3) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Paris, 20 October 2005)

The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO is organizing to ratify the following conventions and recommendations of UNESCO:

- (1) Convention against Discrimination in Education (Paris, 14 December 1960)
- (2) Protocol Instituting a Conciliation and Good offices Commission to be Responsible for Seeking the settlement of any Disputes which may Arise between States Parties to the Convention against Discrimination in Education (Paris, 10 December 1962)
- (3) Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 16 December 1983)
- (4) Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (Paris, 10 November 1989)
- (5) Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (Tokyo, 26 November 2011)
- (6) Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (13 November 2015)
- (7) Recommendation concerning technical and vocational education and training (TVET) (13 November 2015)
- (8) Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (Paris, 25 November 2019)
- (9) Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER) (25 November 2019)
- (10) Recommendation concerning technical and vocational education and training (TVET) (13 November 2015)

Secondly, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO assists the main tasks of UNESCO, Myanmar whose mission is to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, and to sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. In the field of education, the Ministry of Education is supported with varieties of

programmes including reforming its pre-service teacher education to improve the quality of education and strengthen the planning and management capacity of the education sector.

As part of the education system in Myanmar, UNESCO helps to develop systems to improve data, as well as institutionalize peace and sustainable development. In addition, UNESCO is collaborating with the Ministry of Information in promoting Media and Information Literacy (MIL) among the public, as well as with the Ministry of Education on integrating MIL in the teacher education curriculum to identify and counter hate speech and fake news, as well as to engage in intercultural dialogue. Most importantly, considering the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on education, the Ministry of Education is developing a COVID-19 Education Response Plan with the assistance of UNESCO. CapED has launched COVID-19 Education Responses in 17 countries, including Myanmar. **CapED's** interventions are in line with the three flagships: Connectivity, Teachers, and Gender Equality.

Thirdly, the Secretary-General of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Kyi Shwin, Rector of YUFL, recommends and nominates trainings where necessary. Scholars from Myanmar participate in the UNESCO Fellowship Programmes and Training. 33 experts, representing government and non-government organizations from Myanmar, are currently listed in the directory of Marine and Freshwater Professionals.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education held annual events initiated by UNESCO such as **International Literacy Day, World Teachers' Day, etc., with the assistance of** the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO. The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO also participates in regional consultation meetings and networking activities.

Projects currently on-going in the 2019-2022 period are as follows:

- (1) Capacity building for safeguarding cultural heritage in Myanmar (Phase III)
(From 2016-09-12 to 2020-01-01. \$468,229 by Italy)
- (2) Communication for Sustained Livelihood and Food Security, Myanmar (From

- 2014-12-01 to 2020-01-17. \$1,500,000 by the United Nations Office for Project Services)
- (3) Integrating indigenous knowledge to contemporary forest management practices in Myanmar (From 2017-10-10 to 2020-01-01. \$113,160 by Foundation IRIS)
 - (4) JPO for Culture Yangon Project Office Myanmar (From 2016-10-01 to 2020-04-04. \$314,800 by Italy)
 - (5) Networking for peace building and strengthening social transformation in cities, youth and social science organisations (From 2018-01-01 to 2019-12-31. \$48,400 (contributions to the Regular Programme))
 - (6) Partnering with youth: Inclusive and participatory youth-led programmes in Asia and the Pacific (From 2018-01-01 to 2019-12-31. \$96,400 (contributions to the Regular Programme))
 - (7) Promoting public-private partnership for ensuring environmental security and sustainable growth in Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) (From 2019-10-04 to 2020-01-03. \$80,000 by Republic of Korea)
 - (8) Safeguarding Bagan within the World Heritage Framework (From 01-07-2015 to 01-01-2020. \$750,000 by the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ))
 - (9) Safeguarding Natural Heritage in Myanmar within the World Heritage Framework (From 26-03-2013 to 01-01-2020. \$215,166)
 - (10) Safeguarding Natural Heritage in Myanmar within the World Heritage Framework (Phase II) (From 01-12-2014 to 13-09-2019. \$1,294,343 by Norway)
 - (11) Strengthening Business Skills Development for Youth in Myanmar Phase III (From 31-03-2017 to 01-01-2020. \$300,000 by PepsiCo)
 - (12) Strengthening Business Skills for Youth Employment in Myanmar Phase II (From 29-06-2015 to 01-01-2020. \$400,000 by PepsiCo)
 - (13) Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Phase II (From 20-12-2012 to 11-02-2020. \$3,744,115 by Finland)
 - (14) Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Phase II (From 12-04-2012 to 30-06-2020. \$2,250,000 by Australia)
 - (15) Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Phase II (From 07-09-2018 to 31-08-2020. \$1,000,000 by United Kingdom of Great

- Britain and Northern Ireland)
- (16) Strengthening Schools for Education for Sustainable Development in Myanmar (From 18-11-2015 to 11-09-2019. \$250,000 by Panasonic Corporation)
 - (17) Supporting the Post-Disaster Recovery of the Bagan Archaeological Area and Monuments through the Preservation and Digitization of the Bagan Photographic Archive (From 28-06-2018 to 27-06-2021. \$ 511,036 by Republic of Korea)
 - (18) Supporting the safeguarding, management and valorization of Mrauk U (From 28-03-2018 to 31-01-2020. \$347,223 by Italy)
 - (19) UNESCO-GIZ TVET Policy Review in Myanmar (From 06-12-2018 to 01-01-2020. \$124,999 by Germany)

5.2 MAJOR NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

The Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO cooperates and collaborates with other government organizations and international non-government organizations locally and internationally. Major partners are as follows:

UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), International and national NGOs and Universities, National Commissions for UNESCO, UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE), International Experts on Teacher Education Reforms, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), UN Organizations, Government of Myanmar, Union Parliament, Supreme Court, Attorney General Office, Myanmar Press Council, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture (MORAC), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), Ministry of Planning and Finance (MPF), Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT).

5.3 CHALLENGES TO CURRENT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

It is a great pleasure for the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO to participate in the joint project to address common issues affecting National

Commissions in East and Southeast Asia. As this project is being done during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO has faced challenges and difficulties in finishing this project on time. Firstly, data for major contributions before the 2000s are quite difficult to collect as there is no permanent office for the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO. The works of the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO were originally carried out by the directors of the Department of State scholars and then handed over to university rectors because of the functions of the Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO. Secondly, some Secretaries-general had passed away, and along with that the chance for the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO to interview and gather data. Thirdly, the data during 1962-2010 were tough to find due to the 1962 military takeover. Most importantly, as Myanmar is currently facing a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection is unmanageable.

6. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF THE MYANMAR NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

6.1 IDENTIFYING FUTURE COMMON CHALLENGES IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA (REGIONAL AGENDA SETTING)

Most developing countries are mostly dependent upon agriculture, forestry and tourism, all of which can be affected by natural disasters. In 2015, half of the **world's natural disasters took place in the Asia-Pacific** region such as earthquakes, droughts, wild fires, storms, extreme temperatures and floods, causing significant economic losses. Various factors like urbanization, population growth, a decrease in agricultural land and poor policy making are responsible for the increasing food insecurity in Asia and the Pacific. Lack of proper education is also a challenge for East and Southeast Asia. An increase in population leads to failing to provide quality education to all people, giving rise to unemployment, discrimination and food insecurity.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is the subregion's

mechanism that enhances the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Major challenges bearing down on priority areas are: reducing poverty and inequality, engendering inclusive broad-based economic progress that creates decent jobs, promoting healthy lives, ensuring qualifications for all, promoting environmental sustainability and resilience to climate impacts and natural disasters, gender equality and women empowerment, promoting peace and security, and strengthening governance and institutions; these have to do with capacity weaknesses, signifying that a sharp focus on capacity building is vital for the achievement of the SDGs.

National Commissions should seek a wide range of modalities of cooperation with other National Commissions, including intersectoral projects, staff exchange programmes, revamping the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) at the sub-regional and regional levels, and working with UNESCO Field Offices (and Headquarters as appropriate) to develop a common communication platform (CCP) to enhance the visibility of UNESCO at the national and regional levels.

6.2 PROPOSALS/SUGGESTIONS FOR JOINT PROJECTS

Proposal (1) Proposal for the establishment of a regional open education resource platform

The Recommendation on OER (Open Educational Resources) - adopted unanimously by the UNESCO General Conference at its 40th session in November 2019 - supports the creation, use and adaptation of inclusive and quality OER, and facilitates international cooperation in this field.

This Recommendation is the only existing international standard-setting instrument on OER and is the fruit of over a decade of efforts to bring together a wide diversity of stakeholders.

The Recommendation outlines five areas of action, namely:

1. Building the capacity of stakeholders to create, access, re-use, adapt and redistribute OER;
2. Developing supportive policy for OER;
3. Encouraging inclusive and equitable quality OER;
4. Nurturing the creation of sustainability models for OER; and
5. Promoting and reinforcing international cooperation in OER.

At an international level, the adoption of the Recommendation constitutes a decisive step towards building more open and inclusive knowledge societies and towards the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda. Indeed, the implementation of the Recommendation will contribute to the achievement of at least six Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), namely SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities within and across countries), SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals).

In order to implement the actions laid out in the Recommendation, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO would like to suggest the following proposal:

“Proposal for the establishment of a regional open education resource platform”

- To collaborate and advocate regionally and globally in the creation, access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation, redistribution and evaluation of OER to evaluate the quality of open access content.
- To optimize investments in educational and research content creation, as well as ICT infrastructure and curation, in ways that will enable meeting the defined national educational policy priorities more cost-effectively and sustainably.

Proposal (2) Joint research on countering hate speech, promoting diversity in the media, and empowering women, youth and ethnic minorities through enhanced Media and Information Literacy

Southeast Asia is home to the world’s fastest growing population of internet users, with more than 125,000 new users forecast to come online every day through the year 2020. Most of that growth will come via mobile use, and it has

the potential to stimulate new industries, leapfrog legacy business models and fundamentally change the lives of millions of people. Underscoring the emergent need for citizens to acquire media and information competencies due to rapid technological advancements and increasing access to social media, ASEAN countries need to equip citizens, including children and youth, with 21st century media literacy skills, enabling them in the face of information and media content, to identify and counter hate speech and fake news, as well as to engage in intercultural dialogue. Thus, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO would like to propose a “Joint research on countering hate speech, promoting diversity in the media, and empowering women, youth and ethnic minorities through enhanced Media and Information Literacy”.

Proposal (3) Joint research on protection and preservation of cultural heritage in urban areas during and post disasters

Currently, over half of the world’s population lives in urban areas, and the number is expected to continue to grow. The United Nations predicts that by 2050 over two-thirds of people will live in cities.

Urbanization has been a trend for a while in Europe and North America, but the shift is just beginning to take place in Asia and Africa. 90 percent of the increase in urban populations through 2050 is expected to come from those two continents.

Figure 2.
Urban and rural population of the world, 1950–2050

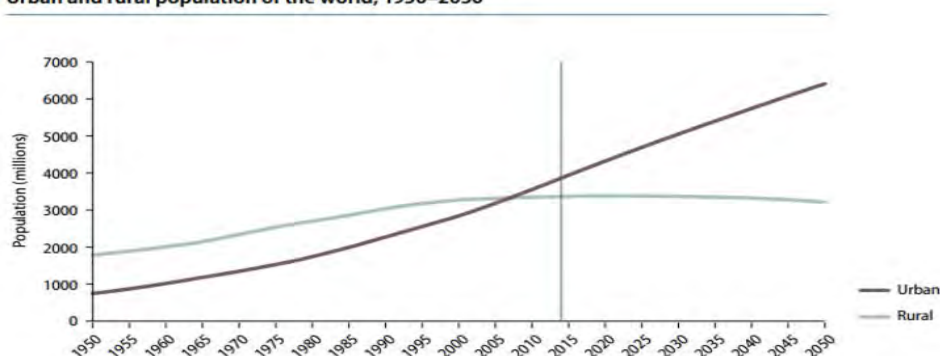


Image: UN

Such a major shift is bound to have major consequences, creating the need to prepare a collective plan for achieving sustainable urban development and housing through both public and private sector efforts. Climate change and natural disasters like volcano eruptions, tsunamis, floods, typhoons and cyclones are major concerns and challenges for ASEAN countries to develop and urbanize. Thus, the Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO would like to propose a "Joint research on protection and preservation of cultural heritage in urban areas during and post disasters".

Proposal (4) Joint research on protecting natural heritage: Irrawaddy Dolphin

Although sometimes called the Irrawaddy river dolphin, it is not a true river dolphin, but an oceanic dolphin that lives in brackish water near coasts, river mouths, and estuaries. According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Irrawaddy dolphins are found in coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia, and in three rivers: the Ayeyarwady (Myanmar), the Mahakam (Indonesian Borneo) and the Mekong. The Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphins inhabit a 118-mile (190 km) stretch of the river between Cambodia and Lao PDR and are scarce—just 92 individuals are estimated to still exist. These dolphins have a bulging forehead, short beak, and 12-19 teeth on each side of both jaws.

The Mekong River, flowing from the Tibetan Plateau through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam to the South China Sea, is home to spectacular biodiversity. Roughly 60 million people live in the region, many in poverty, and depend on the river and its tributaries for food and income. The protection of the Irrawaddy dolphin is crucial for the overall health of the Mekong River—home to an estimated 1,100 species of fish. The Irrawaddy dolphin is also regarded as a sacred animal by both Khmer and Lao people, and is an important source of income and jobs for communities involved in dolphin-watching ecotourism. Irrawaddy dolphins are primarily threatened by bycatch, the accidental capture of aquatic animals in fishing gear.

Myanmar's Department of Fisheries took charge in December 2005, instituting a

protected region in a 74 km (46 mi) segment of the Ayeyarwady River between Mingun and Kyaukmyaung and created multiple provisions, as well. Protective measures in the area include mandatory release of entangled dolphins, prohibition of the catching or killing of dolphins and their trade in whole or in part, and the prohibition of electrofishing and gillnets more than 91 metres (300 ft) long, or spaced less than 180 metres (600 ft) apart. Mercury poisoning and habitat loss from gold-mining dredging operations in the river have been eliminated.

The Irrawaddy dolphin is listed on both Appendix I and Appendix II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. It is listed on Appendix I as this species has been categorized as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant proportion of their range. Thus, **Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO would like to propose a “Joint research on protecting natural heritage: Irrawaddy Dolphin”.**

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Interview with Sayagyi U Than Oo, former Director General, Department of Basic Education

Philippine National Commission for UNESCO

**WALKING BACKWARDS TOWARDS THE FUTURE:
A REFLECTION ON THE EVOLVING ROLES OF
THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO**

Mr. Rajee Seguerra FLORIDO



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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Philippine
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FOREWORD

The Philippine National Commission for UNESCO (PH NatCom) is pleased to share **with you this paper that reflects the Organization's roles and contributions to the** advancement of national and global aspirations for a better humanity. PH NatCom is ever-evolving due to changes in governance and being faced with the challenge of balancing the optimization of human potential with nature conservation and cultural safeguarding. The paper expounds on this and also **features the Organization's vision and rigor to deliver projects together with its** reliable institutional partners at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

Crafting this paper amid the **on-going pandemic complements with PH NatCom's** current exercise of reflecting on its raison d'être. With our common desire to rise against the test of this generation, it is high time for institutions, such as the National Commissions, to synergize efforts to strengthen the role as catalysts and help achieve respective national goals - be it in education, sciences, culture, and communication and information. The collaboration that was made possible by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO enables PH NatCom to rethink **its approach and revisit the learnings from the past to realize UNESCO's thrusts** in the country and the global community. It triggered a deeper and more meaningful reflection on its evolving roles and mandates and the essence of its core - people and purpose. In aiming to contribute to the collective effort of making the Filipino society prosperous, smart and innovative by 2040, the efforts must also align with attaining the vision of a world at peace, where no one is left behind.

Ernesto C. ABELLA
Officer-in-charge
Philippine National Commission for UNESCO

BACKGROUND

The Philippines has a long history of defending and nurturing fundamental human rights that the French Revolution successfully championed in 1789. A century later, Filipino revolutionaries promulgated the Malolos Convention that ensured respect for political and civil rights of all Filipinos, including their freedom of expression and religion, and access to public education, among others. Come the 12th of June 1898, the Filipinos fervidly declared the country a sovereign state – making it the first constitutional democracy in Asia.

While the sovereignty was short-lived due to The Kingdom of Spain and the United States **of America’s collusion through their Paris Treaty in 1898, the** Filipino insulars, particularly President Manuel L. Quezon, continued to ensure that the human rights of Filipinos and their potential as a nation were safeguarded under the American colonial rule over the country. The Presidential Papers of Manuel L. Quezon, which is part of the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register, captured his active involvement in lobbying for political independence and economic development of the country which has colored the character of the Philippine policy and the identity it asserts in the world even at the contemporary time. From the early 1900s until his death in midst of the Second World War, his political influence and the independence movement in the Philippines found resonance in a number of neighboring Asian countries who were also under colonial rule during the period. Further, the advancement of women rights such as women suffrage and girls education were also achieved through legalization as early as the 1930s. The 1937 Philippine National Assembly plebiscite recorded nine for every ten votes (90.94%) in favor of these measures despite the constituents being male-dominated. This virtue of women empowerment is espoused in the writings of a Filipino feminist named Purita Villanueva in a local newspaper during that time that emphasized the importance **of education and nurturing of women’s rationality. According to her, Filipino feminists during her time asserted their suffrage and the right for girls’** education with the primary reasons of fulfilling their familial and societal role as shapers of moral sentiments of the young, and as advisers to their husbands in family

relations (Casambre and Rood, 2012).

Upholding these virtues that bond Filipinos as a nation, the then-Commonwealth of the Philippines was one of the signatories of the 1942 United Nations (UN) Declaration. General Carlos Romulo, who became the first Asian President of the UN Assembly, signed for the country. This made the Philippines among the four Asian nations of the original 51 Member-States who signed the UN Charter in 1945. Upon realizing that wars only result to a negative sum outcome, the Founding Member-States of the UN initiated the call for the establishment of an inter-governmental organization that would build and foster peace in the world that would emancipate from individual human beings regardless of race, ethnicity, **class, gender, and other ascribed and achieved statuses**. The UN's foundational purposes espoused in its Preamble birthed one of its specialized agencies – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

UNESCO AND ITS NATIONAL COMMISSIONS (NatComs)

UNESCO's purpose is to contribute to building peace and security through collaboration of nations in the fields of the sciences, culture, communication, and education. The Philippines ratified UNESCO's Constitution together with the UN Founding Members and other 45 nations in 1945.

The Member-States, to fulfill its reason for being and fully realize Article VII of **UNESCO's Constitution**, agreed during the 20th General Conference that there is a need to have an active support of the intellectual and scientific communities **and the cooperation of citizens to realize UNESCO's thrusts** in their respective countries. As part of the Member-States Constitutional obligations, NatComs **were established to "act as meeting places and connecting bridges between national authorities and a broad range of national bodies and experts in UNESCO's fields of competence"**. Strengthening its capacity as an advisory, liaison, information, and executive body is essential to convert its global aspirations into tangible outcomes. Since its establishment, the NatComs have served as instruments of international understanding and cooperation through

collaboration and contracts with their counterparts in other nations and regions, **and with UNESCO's Regional Offices and centres in fostering regional, sub regional and bilateral cooperation through joint formulation and execution of programmes.**

The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM), also known as the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO (PH NatCom), performs these mandates since its establishment. After almost seven decades, the demands of **pursuing UNESCO's thrusts in the country push the Organization to have evolving roles and functions.** Historically, PH NatCom was a corollary of previous national bodies created to perform specific tasks that had become part of its mandate.

HISTORY AND COMPOSITION OF THE PH NATCOM

In 19 February 1935, President Manuel Quezon issued the Executive Order No. 19 that formed the National Council of Education (NCE). It became an advisory body to the President on general education policy that ensured the welfare of Filipino learners of all ages as the country succeeded dependency from the United States of America to become an independent republic once again. **According to Tating and Tuason (1988), one of its notable achievement was "the establishment of an adult education office to promote the instruction of adults, especially illiterates," (p. 21) which is also known as, in our time, lifelong learning.** The NCE would assume the responsibilities of implementing UNESCO programmes in the country after it **became part of UNESCO's ratification in 1945.** This is before its transformation as the National Commission of Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Matters (NACESCUM) in 1947.

With the country attaining independence again, Senator Proceso Sebastian authored the Republic Act No. 176 that established NACESCUM in 1947 as part of **the country's commitment to uphold UNESCO's Constitution. NACESCUM served** as a liaison body between UNESCO and the Philippine Government, while also assuming the purpose of NCE as an advisory body to the President. Its first and last head was Dr. Gabriel Mañalac. NACESCUM had fifteen members divided into

three committees: education, science, and culture. Among its notable achievements were to secure educational and information materials, science equipment and supplies, and scholarships during the post-World War II period. Moreover, it successfully sought the assistance of UNESCO for conducting a study for reorganizing the educational system in the country, through the UNESCO Educational Consultative Mission in 1949, which also become a platform to realize the benefits that UNESCO can bring to the country and vice versa. This paved way to its revamp with broader functions as the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM/PH NATCOM).

A known suffragette, the first Filipino woman Senator Geronima Pecson authored the Republic Act No. 621 which established the PH NatCom in 12 December 1951. From a body under the Office of the President, it was officially created under the Department of Foreign Affairs to perform the roles that the NEC and NACESCUM **previously held, and to** “associate principal bodies in the Philippines interested in educational, scientific and cultural matters with the work of the UNESCO, in accordance with Article VII of the Constitution of the aforesaid Organization” (Section 1 of the Republic Act 621, Philippine Congress, 1951). From three major areas of work, the Commission has also been mandated to work for the advancement of the social and human sciences, and communication and information in the country. The Commission is composed of 45 appointive and ex-officio members from the public and private sectors appointed by the President of the Philippines. These members served in honorary capacity and would not receive compensation, except per travel expenses and per diems, during their either a year or two-year term. Committees and subcommittees can **also be created for the effective and efficient performance of the Commission’s** powers and duties. The PH NatCom Secretariat has also been created to attend to all of its technical and administrative matters. Other than the mentioned roles of PH NatCom above, RA 621 also mandates the Organization:

- to meet at least once a year on such date and place as it might designate;
- to promulgate rules and regulations for the conduct of its own affairs (with the approval of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, as Chairperson);
- to advise the Government of the Philippines on matters relating to the UNESCO and on the best ways and means by which educational, scientific,

and cultural developments could be best taken advantage of by the Philippines;

- to advise Philippine delegations to the UNESCO Conference; and to
- to submit an annual report to the President and the Congress of its activities and accomplishments during the year.

The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines was transferred to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in 1976. Executive Order No. 850 dated 01 December 1982 governing the reorganization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Administrative Code of 1987 provide details on the role of DFA over the PH NatCom, which closely coordinates with the United Nations and Other International Organization and the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO.

These mandates and its bodies continued to evolve for the next decades due to expansion of activities and the desire to strengthen the work of PH NatCom amid external factors. It assumes functions that include advisory, liaison, information, executive body while also performing evaluative, technical, and administrative duties through its Secretariat. Table 1 below summarizes these modifications in the composition of what is now called the PH NatCom:

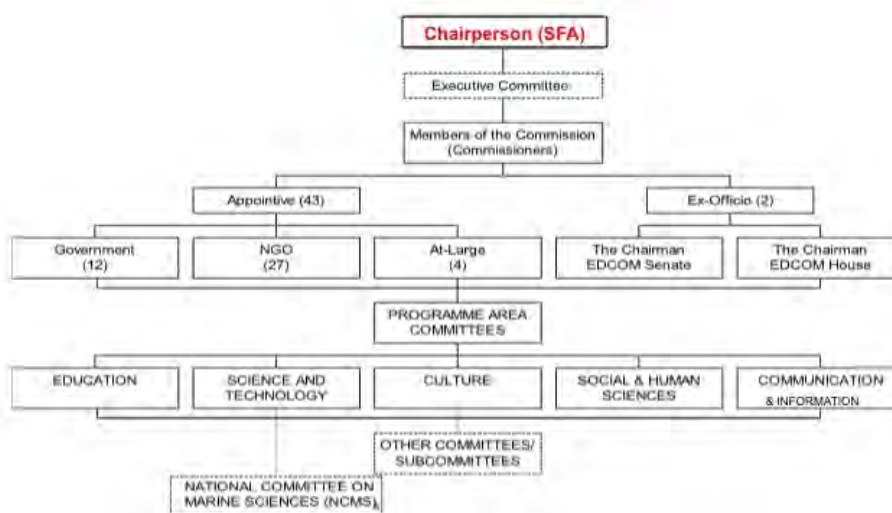
YEAR	ORDER/ACT/ DECREE		NAME OF BODY/OFFICE	COMPOSITION			PROGRAMME AREA COMMITTEE	ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY SET-UP	
	No.	Date		COMMISSIONERS	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	SECRETARIAT			
1935	19	19 Feb 1935	NCE	-	-	-	Education	Office of the President of the Philippines	
1947	176	20 June 1947	NACESCUM	15	-	-	Education, Science, Culture		
1951	621	26 May 1951	UNACOM/PH NATCOM	32	-	-	Education, Science, Culture, Communication and Information, and Social and Human Sciences	Department of Foreign Affairs	
1953	892	20 June 1953			7	20		Office of the President of the Philippines	
1964	3849	13 April 1964		45				11	10
1973	221	20 June 1973		39	7	14			Department of Foreign Affairs
1986									
2013									

2020			15 of 45 positions	-	14		
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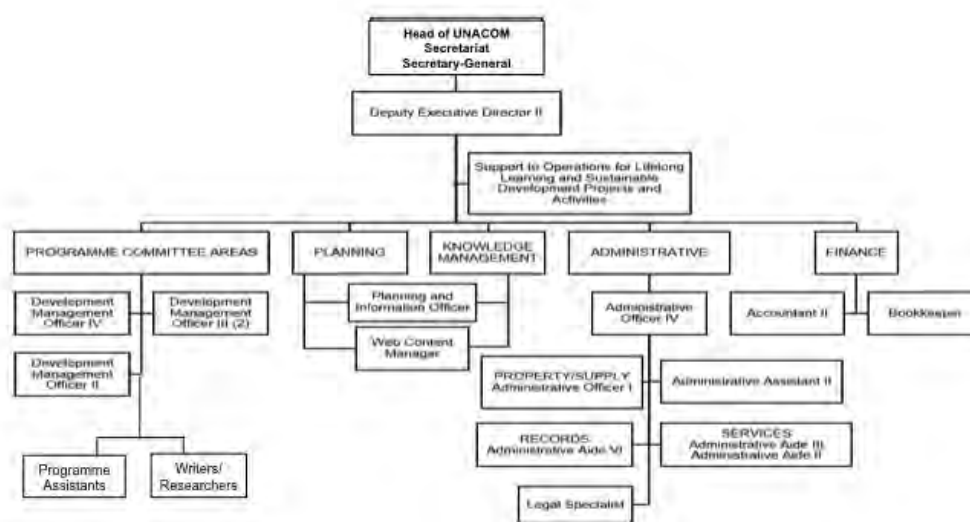
Table 1. An updated version of the statuses on creation and/or organization of the UNACOM, initially crafted by Tating & Tuason (1988)

Moreover, the PH NatCom has also been active in the promotion of global and **national goals that are associative with UNESCO’s functions**. Some of the most notable activities that PH NatCom had organized were: Regional and Sub-regional Meetings of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia and sectoral seminars/projects/workshop which were attended by former UNESCO Directors-General, Members of the Executive Board, and other personalities.

The UNACOM is chaired by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (SFA). In the event that there are appointed Commissioners, the SFA also serves as the Presiding Officer of the Commission and the Head ex-officio of the Executive Committee. The Secretariat is headed by a Secretary-General (Executive Director) and composed of 14 plantilla (regular items), 11 of which are filled up at present. Below are the organizational structures of the PH NatCom and its Secretariat:



The PH NatCom Chair with Commissioners and Committees



The PH NatCom Secretariat

VISIONS AND PREDICTIONS

Amid internal and external challenges, PH NatCom continues to envision itself “as the primary enabling agency in maximizing Philippine engagement in UNESCO and in advancing UNESCO programs in the country” (PH NatCom, 2018, p.8). In its Quality Management Service Manual (2018), it mainly targets “to serve as a consultative and liaison body that would bridge the work and programs of the Philippine government with UNESCO’s own work in education, the sciences, culture and communication; [and] to ensure that UNESCO’s mandates and programmes are promoted and implemented in the Philippines through close partnerships or projects at the national and local levels, with the UNESCO Secretariat at the Headquarters and in the field, and other national commissions” (p. 8). Moreover, in its 2019 Annual Accomplishment Report, UNACOM specifically aims to “support the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)... [and] contribute to the undertakings at country-level towards realizing the Philippine dream of “comfortable life for all” (p.4).

To further elaborate, the SDGs are a global action plan to achieve peace and prosperity for peoples and the planet of the current and future generations. These 17 goals are the summary of numerous concerns raised during the first-

ever global consultation on what are the most pressing issues that Earth and society face. Countries aligned their national development plans to these global blueprint as their contribution to its realization by 2030. In the case of the Philippines, the **first-ever nationwide stakeholders' consultation on the aspirations of the Filipino people for their self and the community** term was conducted in 2015 which resulted to the crafting of The Vision 2040. The Vision 2040 encapsulates the long-term individual and societal goals of Filipinos as: have a strongly-rooted, comfortable, and secured life. In recent years, the country has been working on strengthening the foundations to achieve this common goal through its first medium-term Philippine Development Plan (PDP) (2017-2020). It also takes into account the Philippines' **international commitments** such as the SDGs (National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), 2017). In essence, efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030 contribute to **the fulfillment of the Philippines' societal goals by 2040.**

Yet, with the current global and national challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold, progresses in these long-term goals are severely hampered. According to UN DESA Policy Brief (2020), the largest global GDP contraction since the Great Depression in 1920 is expected. Millions can be pushed to extreme poverty, reversing the positive trend since 2000s. Workers in the informal sector become more vulnerable, and lesser access to any form of social protection can be the unexpected outcomes of this pandemic. In an effort to **avoid these foresights, the Philippines' NEDA has recently revised the PDP** from achieving an upper-middle income country by 2022 to gearing towards a healthy and more resilient Philippines with focus on improving the healthcare system, food security, and digital government (Luci-Atienza, 2020).

WALK BACKWARDS INTO THE FUTURE

With the current situation vis-à-vis its vision, there is a need to assess the capacity and progress of PH NatCom in delivering its mandates and achieving its organizational goals. By doing so, it can strengthen its capacity to contribute to peace-building that are aligned with the updated national strategy, and to

mitigating efforts that address international concerns. As the Maori saying goes, *ka mua, ka muri* – walk backwards into the future. We need to reflect on our past in approaching future.

While **official reports that summarize the Organizations' achievements for the past years through its annual reports are abundant**, the situation amid the pandemic, and later in post- COVID-19 state, calls for a deeper understanding of **one's organizational identity that official reports may had captured, but could further be expounded and reflected upon**. There is a need to appreciate PH NatCom's identity from the **subjective viewpoints of its previous and current parts to reveal its personality and staying power**.

Understanding PH NatCom's identity can revitalize its commitment in the pursuit of its mandate and thrusts which would result to its improved service delivery and expanded reach. It can also strengthen client-focused and grassroots-based collaborations through the entry-points that may surface, which includes synergizing relationships at the local, regional, and global levels. These include, among others, partnerships with NatComs at the regional and global levels with the outcome of proposed joint programmes that would contribute to the achievement of their respective national developments and the 2030 Agenda. In the case of the Philippines, it can open possibilities on deepening and widening its works towards realization of its mandates in line with the updated PDP towards Vision 2040.

In theoretical underpinnings, Gioaia, Schultz, and Corley (2000), studying organizational identity mentioned that it offers insights on the link between theory and practice. It also builds a conceptual bridge to traditional analytical divides such as micro and macro, agency and structure, and individual- group-, and organizational levels of research. In relation to this, Albert & Whetten (1985: 280-281) suggested studying organizational identity in inductive approach if the researcher intends to discover idiosyncratic features of the organizations. **This means that it will be based on own members' perceptions of themselves and of the organization**. Further, Atamer and Calori (1993) developed a measurement method that serves the goal of diagnosing the long-term competitive position of

the organization. They distinguished four components of identity namely: the organization's goal orientation, its norms and values ('culture'), its management system ('système de management') and the organization's dominant logic ('recette stratégique').

With this background, this paper asked:

What are the impacts of PH NatCom's evolving roles and goals?

In order to answer this main research question, the following specific objectives were set:

- to determine the work conditions of PH NatCom;
- to know the strengths and points for improvement;
- to reflect the interplay of personal influences and organizational development, and vice versa;
- to narrate diverse experiences in order to identify the opportunities and challenges while working in/with PH NatCom;
- to validate PH NatCom's competitive advantages at the local, national, and regional, and if possible, global levels; and
- to identify possible mechanisms that could help achieve the organizational goals in the long-term.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative, case study design as it helped "understand the phenomena in context-specific settings, such as the real-world setting, where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (p. 39). The application of a case study design enabled the researcher to understand the impacts of PH NatCom's evolving roles and mandates at the individual to institutional levels from the context of participants and their interactions (Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift, 2014). As Gerring (2007) pointed out, there are certain cases that an "in-depth knowledge of an individual example is more helpful than a fleeting knowledge about a larger number of examples" (p.1).

The study utilized secondary data analysis and purposive sampling given the familiarity with the population of the study (Glen, 2015). The researcher sought help from his senior colleagues and his supervisor to determine the best participants for the study. In total, there were 23 participants of the study: seven former and twelve current PH NatCom Secretariat staff, and four **institutional partners’ representatives**. **Table 2 below summarizes the professional details of former PH NatCom Secretariat staff and institutional partners who were participants of this study:**

Position and Organization	Length of Service/ Relationship with UNACOM
Former Assistant Secretary of the Philippine Communication Operations Office (PCOO), and former Acting Deputy Executive Director (Deputy)	5 years
Retired as Deputy	28 years
Former Programme Officer (PO)	6 years
Former PO	8 years
Former PO for Culture and CI	4.5 years
Former Programme Assistant for SHS and CI (PA)	1.25 years
Former Planning and Information Officer (PIO)	1.25 years
President, Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication	25 years
College Administrator and ASPNet Adviser	25 years
President, Philippine Normal University	10 years
President and CEO, Mapua University	5 years

Table 2. List of participants of the study.

Meanwhile, current PH NatCom staff who were part of the study comprised of a Deputy (5 years), PO for Science (32 years), Administrative Assistant (AA) (29 years), Administrative Officer (AO) (21 years), Accountant (5 years), PO (6 years), PO (7 years), Supply Officer (12 years), and Budget Assistant (5 years).

For the former secretariat employees and institutional partners, they were engaged in an online questionnaire through Google Forms or online meeting via Google Meet. Senior colleagues helped the researcher contact and disseminate online questionnaires to them; while a programme officer assisted him in the conduct of online face-to-face interviews by being the moderator. These two platforms were made available in order to accommodate the demands of

collecting data in a remote manner due to the on-going pandemic. In addition, current Officers provided substantial work in compiling all related internal documents that became helpful in writing this research. Current PH NatCom employees were engaged in an online focus group discussion that enabled them to deliberately agree or probe the insights of their fellow participants that enriched the discussion. A separate collection of data from the current Deputy was performed as she also served as the Officer-in-Charge of PH NatCom in 2015-2016. The researcher opted to get her insights as an individual similar to former deputies and commissioners who were involved in this study. Data collection was done from 15 September – 2 October 2020.

Data were processed through thematic analysis. The researcher initially applied **an open coding technique to “let the text speak for itself” (CESSDA, 2017-2020)** and categorized them into common and unique ideas. He triangulated the emerged themes from pieces of literatures gathered; and finally, interpreted these triangulated themes vis-à-vis the research objectives. Names of participants were omitted in virtue of beneficence. Initial findings were also validated from the current Secretariat.

WORK CONDITIONS OF PH NATCOM

This section will present the findings on the current situation of PH NatCom in terms of work setting, its strengths and weaknesses, and perceived functions.

In terms of the working conditions, majority of participants believed that close personal and working relations exist within the organization. The general working relationship is *closely-knitted, collegial, harmonious*, and with *minimal intrigue*. This does not mean that everything is positive. There were instances in the past that revealed that like other organizations, the PH NatCom went through challenges in interpersonal relationships as a result of diverse views and set of beliefs. A former programme officer believed that different personalities within the organization greatly affect the work dynamics which can be solved through better communication. A former Deputy shared that loss of trust among

colleagues/workers/ leadership had also occurred (at some point) within the organization. A current part of the Administrative group shared his experience of receiving a poor performance evaluation not because he was not doing his job but because there were no tasks assigned to him (reason of which was not clearly known to him).

Despite these, all institutional partners have a positive outlook on PH NatCom’s work and described it as *professional, considerate, and cooperative*. It was shared that diversity in terms of regional representation and gender balance are some of its organizational features. In terms of geographic representation, PH NatCom staff are mainly from Luzon – one of the three major group of islands in the Philippines.

DESCRIPTION	THEME
EXCITING	VARYING PERCEPTION ON THE JOB
CHALLENGING	
RELATIVELY MORE WORK THAN BEFORE	VARYING EXPERIENCES IN TERMS OF WORKLOAD
UNEVEN WORKLOAD PER SECTOR DEPENDING ON PRIORITIES	
MANAGEABLE WORK	
LESS INTRIGUE	CLOSE PERSONAL AND WORKING RELATIONS
CLOSELY-KNIT RELATIONSHIP	
COLLEGIAL	
HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP	
TENDENCY TO BECOME PERSONALISTIC	
LOSS OF TRUST ON WORKERS AND LEADERSHIP	ESPOUSING DIVERSITY AT SOME EXTENT
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION	
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION SKEWED IN LUZON PROVINCES	
GENDER BALANCE	
DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES	POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON PH NATCOM’S WORK
PROFESSIONAL	
CONSIDERATE	
COOPERATIVE	

Table 3. Work conditions in PH NatCom.

A number of them have also varying perceptions on the job and experience in terms of workload. In terms of the mechanisms available/utilized to deliver annual projects, programs, and activities, as illustrated in Table 4, it can be observed that the mechanisms are evolving. PH NatCom employees who have more than 25 years of being part of the organization can attest to this. The PH NatCom may have become more reflexive over time due to internal and external factors. A main factor identified was the lack of Commissioners, thereby the non-formation of Programme Committees that were supposed to spearhead direction-setting and contribute advice for PH NatCom's thrusts. Participants who had served in recent years/are serving the organization assessed that project vetting and implementation *may emanate from the Secretariat, from established and potential partners, and may also tend to be more personality-based with a loose structure in project implementation*. Meanwhile, participants who had served the organization for more than seven years recalled that the projects and partners were *selected based on committee-established guidelines*. It was further explained that PH NatCom optimized UNESCO Programmes and submitted complete proposals that underwent a rigorous vetting process. Which setting is better is up for further verification as a former PO, who shared the top-down approach in project selection and implementation during her time of service, mentioned that *"it would be a good practice to democratize project calls and ensure other stakeholders are given opportunity to engage and participate."* In recent years, a former PO who was a recent employee of the organization echoed the same sentiment, but pointing out to different factor which is the **Organization's dependence to the government's budgeting/fiscal schedule**. She also hoped that the PH NatCom can have more flexibility in implementing projects that re deemed beneficial to the country. It may be noted that as an attached agency of the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, the primary source of budget is the General Appropriations Act (National Budget) which means that PH NatCom abides by the Procurement Law and other Government guidelines which may not necessarily jive with the systems and procedures of its would be partners.

For PH NatCom's long-term institutional partners, as reflected in Table 3, they mentioned that project vetting has been based on an *impartial appreciation of*

expertise, competencies, the ability to deliver or credibility of the partner, and their integrity.

INITIAL THEME	THEME
LOOSE STRUCTURE IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	EVOLVING MECHANISM ON UTILIZING/DELIVERING ANNUAL PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES, AND ACTIVITIES
TAPPING ESTABLISHED PARTNERS	
OPEN TO NEW PARTNERSHIPS	
PERSONALITY-BASED, NOT INSTITUTIONS-BASED	
LARGELY DEPENDENT ON GOVERNMENT BUDGETING AND CALENDARING	
BASED ON AN IMPARTIAL APPRECIATION OF EXPERTISE, COMPETENCIES, AND ABILITY TO DELIVER/CREDIBILITY, INTEGRITY	
COMMITTEE-ESTABLISHED GUIDELINES IN SELECTING PARTNERS	
TOP-DOWN APPROACH IN PROJECT SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION	
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FROM THE SECRETARIAT	

Table 4. Mechanisms in PH NatCom.

PH NatCom's Strengths and Weaknesses

Impressions on the strengths and weaknesses of PH NatCom were also solicited from the participants. Table 5 summarizes their themed answers. Those identified as strength have corresponding feature that also serves as its weakness. This includes PH NatCom's attachment to DFA. One PO believes that *"its attachment to DFA provides clout, diplomatic experience and expertise needed to ensure Philippine contributions to UNESCO."* In contrast, some former

PO view the attachment as a government agency as unattractive due to bureaucratic concerns and stiff regulation on creating permanent positions. This relates to the issue of limited number of staff that several participants raised. According to them, this affects the performance of the agency vis-a-vis its increasing role. It was also raised that PH NatCom is comprised of staff that comes from different age groups with a strong youth representation.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
(Balderama) ATTACHMENT TO DFA/GOVERNMENT	
BALANCED AGE GROUP – FROM YOUNG TO EXPERIENCED	LIMITED NUMBER OF STAFF
WIDE RANGE OF NETWORK FROM TOP TO GRASSROOTS LEVEL	LESS GRASSROOTS EFFORTS
	NEED FOR MORE NETWORKING ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
LIAISON AND COORDINATION WORK	NEED TO SUSTAIN PARTNERSHIPS
HIGHLY-EXPERIENCED AND COMPETENT STAFF	NEED FOR MORE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR STAFF
SUPPORTIVE OF ONE ANOTHER AND PARTNERS	
YOUTH REPRESENTATION	
LONG-STANDING OF WOMEN LEADERS	
LOVE AND BELIEF TO UNACOM'S IDEALS	
	NEED TO STRENGTHEN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
	THE NEED TO DEMOCRATIZE REPRESENTATION IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GATHERINGS

Table 5. Identified strengths and weaknesses of PH NatCom.

Its other strengths include the *long-standing leadership of empowered women*, and *love and belief to PH NatCom's ideals*. In terms of capacity of staff, former Officials assessed that they have been highly experienced and competent. Despite this, some former and current POs see the need to further enhance capacities through trainings for the staff and its partners. Some partners raised that technical writing skills must be further improved which relates to current staff's suggestion for advance trainings on research and technical writing. Table 5 summarizes PH NatCom's strengths and weaknesses.

Roles of PH NatCom

Relating to the official mandates of PH NatCom, this research also attempted to discover how the previous employees and institutional partners perceive the translation of official mandates of a NatCom in Philippine context. These were elicited from 11 previous employees and institutional partners in hope to capture a more balanced assessment. The Figure 1 shows the summary of their responses.

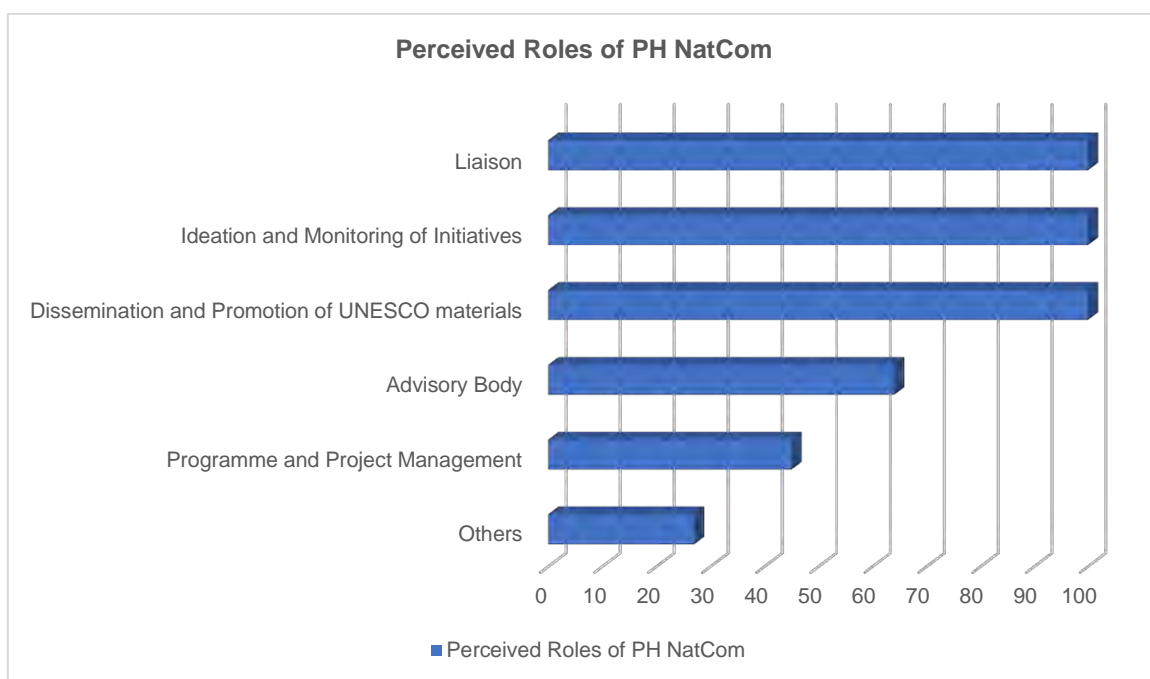


Figure 1. Perceived roles of PH NatCom.

The PH NatCom is perceived as performing beyond the roles expected of a NatCom as stipulated in the UNESCO Constitution, albeit in varying degrees. All participants perceived PH NatCom as *a liaison body between the Philippine Government and UNESCO, a body that disseminates and promotes UNESCO materials, and an office that ideate and monitor initiatives under UNESCO programmes*. On the other hand, it is perceived as performing less in terms of its *advisory role* and *expanding involvement in programme and project management*. The primary advisory role is expected from the pool of Commissioners who, at the recent years, are not completely appointed. Meanwhile, the result in programme and project management may complement

current programme officer's insight on the adverse effect of having limited staff in PH NatCom to its performance vis-a-vis its increasing role. This also relates to the comment on how project vetting has evolved from being a top-down approach with having a less democratized selection of projects to a more democratic, but loosely implemented project management.

On the other hand, PH NatCom is also perceived as *a repository of updated database of experts, as a champion of the 2030 Agenda, and a grant-giving institution to implement UNESCO-related projects*. These expanded roles could be attributed to PH NatCom's long history of engaging with prime intellectuals and movers of the Philippine society over generations, sustaining its relevance as an active institution that contributes to the achievement of global goals.

THE WORK CONDITIONS IN PH NATCOM IN RECENT DECADES

The primary data collected validated the organizational structure and internal challenges identified from the secondary data. Despite this situation, primary data highlighted the evolving mechanisms on utilizing/delivering annual projects, programmes, and activities in PH NatCom. It is able to build constructive relationships and maintain a favorable image with its institutional partners in advancing its thrusts despite several factors and challenges.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND PH NATCOM

This section will discuss the reflection of participants in the interplay of their **personal influences and PH NatCom's development, and vice versa**. This follows the pieces of literature of Gioaia, Schultz, and Corley (2020), Albert & Whetten (1985: 280-281), and Atamer and Calori (1993). The narration of their relevant and significant experiences enabled the emergence of themes used in the analysis. This section will conclude in presenting the pieces of advice of the participants of the study.

Overall, participants mentioned positive contributions and outcomes while

working with/in PH NatCom. The table 6 summarizes the findings. Some contributions and outcomes identified are also complementary such as finding and consequently sharing their advocacy for the development of the organization. Advocacies mentioned were *inclusion, youth participation in development sector, heritage conservation, lifelong learning, global citizenship, institutionalization of biosphere sciences, freedom of expression and information, and media and information literacy*. This relates to dedicating one’s skills and talents that also surfaced in one former officer’s sharing that her writing skills improved and she still finds it useful in her current work. In the case of former and current Deputies, working in PH NatCom had given/has been giving them opportunity to hone skills in strengthening local and international institutional linkages and to provide guidance to the staff in all aspects of work, which in turn, hone their leadership and other life skills.

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ORGANIZATION	THEME	PERSONAL OUTCOMES OF WORKING IN/WITH PH NATCOM	THEME
Sharing personal advocacies	OPTIMIZATION OF ONE’S POTENTIAL FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Sense of purpose/finding advocacy	INTRAPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
Dedicating skills and talents		Fulfilment of aspirations	
Guiding staff in administrative and substantive work		Wider knowledge on government work and UNESCO’s work	
Institutionalization of programmes and projects		Financial independence	
		Clearer sense of self	
		Increased societal awareness	INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
		Honed leadership and other life skills	
		Multisectoral exposure that build network	
		Work-life balance	

Table 6. The Individuals and the PH NatCom.

In terms of personal outcomes of working in/with PH NatCom, participants affirmed that it has allowed/allows them to develop at the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. For the intrapersonal level, its benefits span from *financial*

independence to fulfillment of aspirations which contribute to a *clearer sense of self*, other than *increased social awareness*. For example, a current PO mentioned that they have become more independent financially while working in the Organization for many years. Furthermore, working in the organization brings *significant knowledge on and appreciation of government and UNESCO work and dynamics*. For the interpersonal development, it was also mentioned that working in PH NatCom provides *multi-sectoral exposure that build one's confidence, network and skill set*. Employees who are married said that it also offers *work-life balance*. One officer shared that the demand of his work is relatively lighter compared to his previous work as a teacher. For those who have children, they said that their respective work remain manageable in a way that they can also attend to the needs of their family, especially for those who have kids.

Through their respective experience, participants said that they would recommend working in PH Natcom to others. They viewed working in PH NatCom as *fulfilling, a unique and rewarding learning opportunity, a chance to expand one's knowledge, an effective form of service to country and humanity, and an excellent resource organization*.

This research also collected the pieces of advice that participants intend to give to future PH NatCom workers. One institutional partner believes that *working in PH NatCom is both a job and advocacy*. For him, networking and collaboration skills are always required for PH NatCom's workers. He further explained that *the ability to find true talents and genuine advocates would also be helpful in advancing UNESCO's thrusts in the country*. This relates to a former PO's advice on *learning the art of conversation* in order to optimize PH NatCom's established and potential network. Some former officials and POs emphasized the need to *learn all the aspect of UNESCO's work and the Philippines' interests by heart and mind which can be enriched for a lifetime*. Other pieces of advice include *pursuing advanced studies* and *maintaining consistency in work-related efforts*.

For the PO with more than three decades of service in the Organization, he would prefer future PH NatCom workers to be *patient, not too sensitive,*

technologically-adept, and flexible. Another PO added that new workers must also *manage their expectations* because, while it gives a lot of opportunities such as travel and meeting experts, there are also organizational challenges that could affect one's working experience. Factors such as *limited financial and human resources* and *lack of sustained communication* were also raised as other challenges that future workers may need to face and address. Despite these challenges, one of the institutional partners assessed that PH NatCom *excellently delivered the expected outputs merely because of their passion and dedication.* Another one shared that *the accomplishments in the past engagements were attributable to teamwork and the drive to accomplish something as part of collective advocacies.*

THE GROWTH OF PH NATCOM AND THE INDIVIDUALS OVER TIME

The works and priorities that were mentioned in the secondary data also reflect the participants' personal advocacies such as lifelong learning, heritage conservation, and quality education for all. Moreover, primary data reveals that while PH NatCom contributes to the achievement of global and national agenda in the recent decades, it also brings intra- and inter-personal development skills to its workers and partners. This is why working in PH NatCom is recommendable – as it is also *fulfilling, a learning opportunity, gives a lot of opportunities and expands one's network, and an effective form of service to the nation and global community.*

PH NATCOM'S INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

This part will discuss PH NatCom's progress and achievement in terms of national and global goals from the perspective of former employees and selected institutional partners. It will then present and analyze the Organization's competitive advantage at the local to international levels from their perspective, including the current employees. It will conclude in listing suggested mechanisms

to achieve their perceived roles and contributions of PH NatCom in the long run.

Contribution to MDGs and SDGs

Since some of the participants had/have worked with PH NatCom before the works related to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, they were given an opportunity to assess which MDGs did PH NatCom contribute the most. As shown in Tables 7, participants believed that it was on the achievement of universal primary education. The works have been continued through contribution for attaining quality education for all at all times (SDGs) at the present. PH NatCom is also perceived as having sustained its efforts in the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. Meanwhile, sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) is also a goal in which PH NatCom is perceived as contributing the most. Partnership for All (SDG 17), and Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16) complete the top 5 SDGs in which PH NatCom is perceived as contributing the most.

TOP 3 MDGs
<i>Achieve Universal Primary Education (100%)</i>
<i>Promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (55%)</i>
<i>Ensure environmental sustainability (55%)</i>
TOP 5 SDGs
<i>Quality Education (100%)</i>
<i>Sustainable Cities and Communities (100%)</i>
<i>Partnership for All (90%)</i>
<i>Gender Equality (55%)</i>
<i>Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (45%)</i>

Table 7. Top performance of PH NatComs in Global Goals.

While this is the perception of previous employees and institutional partners, a current programme officer asserted that PH NatCom consistently contributes to the achievement of the SDG 14: Life Below Water and also SDG 15: Life on Land through our active participation to UNESCO Programmes such as the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC); the Man and the Biosphere

(MAB), Geoparks, the World Heritage, and Creative Cities Programmes. In fact, the Sub-committee on Marine Sciences was reactivated in 2017 to serve as national focal point on IOC matters.

Meanwhile, sustaining the work for the achievement of SDG 11 is also mainly regarded as an area to further work on as reflected in Table 8. Half of the participants also saw the need to give more value on works related SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being; and in other areas such as SDGs 3, 10, 13, 16, and 17.

Top SDGs that PH NatCom needs to further work on
<i>Sustainable Cities and Communities (64%)</i>
<i>Good Health and Well-Being (45%)</i>
<i>Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Climate Action; Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; and Partnership for All (36%)</i>

Table 8. Top SDGs PH NatCom needs to work on.

A former PO assessed that it is quite challenging to assess which among the SDGs would require PH NatCom’s specific contributions as the works are often, if not always, transversal. Nonetheless, the participants gave their suggestions on how PH NatCom can improve its works on SDGs in the country. These are listed in the Table 9 below:

SUGGESTED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE PH NATCOM’S WORK ON SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing good programs to underserved communities (rural, urban poor, indigenous, etc) • Mobilizing multi-sectoral supports and enhance partnerships with grassroots and community organizations • Organizing high-level impact initiatives • Enhancing partnerships with government agencies, particularly with NEDA, and in other sectors • Seizing every opportunity to include projects that put forward the attainment of SDGs. • Initiating programs/projects related to monitoring and evaluation and report results of M & E

- Designating a focal person for each region to further strengthen partnership and collaboration

Table 9. Suggested efforts from participants that PH NatCom can undertake.

UNESCO Programmatic Areas

This research also attempted to provide a snippet on the overall perception of PH NatCom's performance in terms of UNESCO's five programmatic thrusts on Natural Science, Culture, Education, Social and Human Sciences, and Communication and Information. Figure 2 below shows that Natural Sciences is the perceived area where PH NatCom performs well, while the area that it perceived as relatively least effective is in Communication and Information.

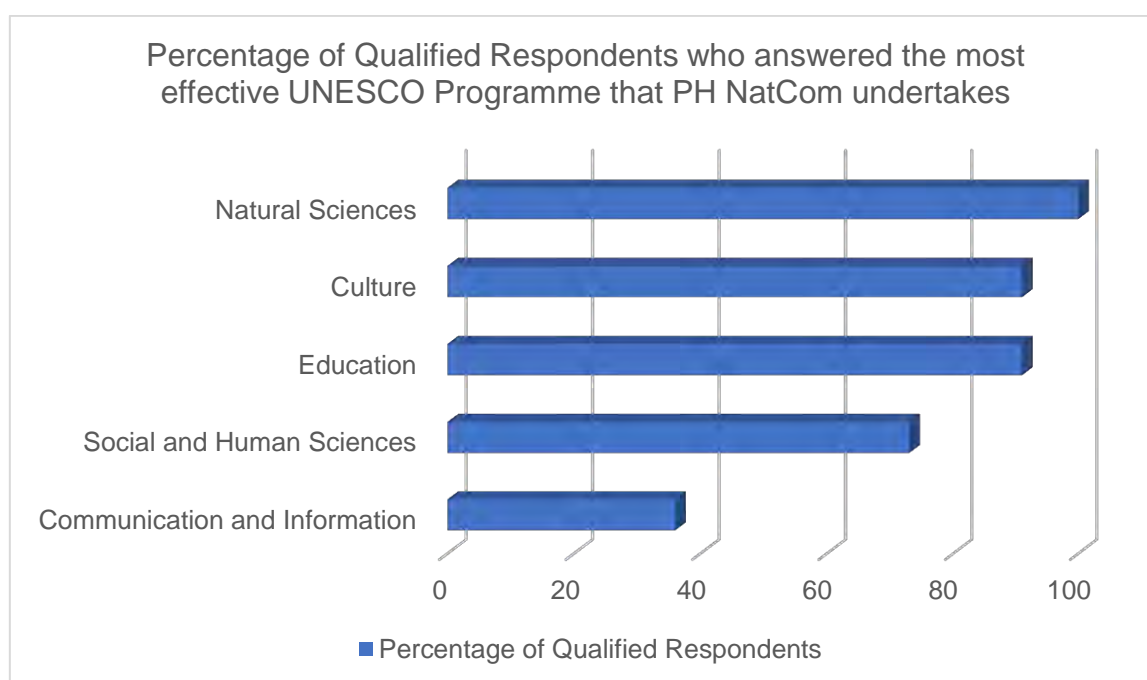


Figure 2. Percentage of Qualified respondents on most effective UNESCO Programme that PH NatCom undertakes.

A former Deputy mentioned that PH NatCom was *able to achieve a lot of good work in all areas during her term due to active committees through strong leadership of Committee Head*. Meanwhile, another former Deputy assessed that *it was in the areas of Education, Natural Sciences, and Culture* which they

contributed significantly. A former PO, meanwhile, attested to the *strong* Social and Human Science sector that encompassed the works in Culture and Natural Sciences through publications due to the leadership of former Secretary-General Virginia Miralao – a renowned Filipino social scientist. Meanwhile, some shared that Communication and Information was *less explored and innovative* and they hope PH NatCom can be more active. Some emphasized *the need to organize more projects that would make the communities realize the essence of UNESCO Conventions*. In light of the on-going pandemic, institutional partners advised PH NatCom *to re-evaluate its priorities in order to be more relevant and responsive*.

PH NatCom’s competitive advantages and entry-points for improvement

As witness to PH NatCom’s evolving identity, the participants also know the **Organizations’ competitive advantages and entry-points for improvement**. The table 10 below summarizes their insights which are mainly categorized as local and national levels, and regional and international levels.

For the local and national levels, a current **PO highlighted the organization’s involvement on monitoring the progress of the Philippines in achieving the targets set for the SDG-4**. On the other hand, the need to *revive the Associated Schools Network Projects/Programmes* was raised by one of the long-term institutional partners. In terms of national development plan, a PO mentioned that the organization contributes significantly to the enhancement of social fabric pillar of the mid-term Philippine Development Plan (2015-2020) through the culture sector. **In the institutional/governance aspect, he said that PH NatCom’s contribution is its strict compliance with government procedures**. PH NatCom’s ability to establish platforms for collaborations and creation of spaces for dialogues is also seen as its competitive advantage. Relative to this, current PO stressed the need to establish more partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to strengthen the Social and Human Sector thrust of UNESCO in the country. Former POs and institutional partners raised the need to increase the number of its employees. This would also make PH NatCom avail more opportunities to further enhance the skills of its staff.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS	
STRENGTHS	ENTRY-POINTS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Involvement on monitoring the progress of achieving the SDG-4 Agenda	The need to revive ASPnet Programme
Contribution to the enhancement of social fabric pillar of the mid-term Philippine Development Plan (2015-2020) through the culture sector and strict compliance with government procedures	Need to increase in number of employees and further enhancement of skills through training
Establishment of platforms for collaborations and creation of spaces for dialogues in five UNESCO sectors	Need to establish more partnerships with NGOs in Social and Human Sciences Sector
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS	
Organizational structure of PH NatCom	Need for increased government support – funding, prioritization, etc.
The number and quality of staff members	Access to more alternative funding
The proactive stance of PH NatCom when participating in regional and international events	Fortification of partnerships with UNESCO Regional Offices and other NatComs in the region
Best practices here in the Philippines in terms of UNESCO's works	Convergence and learned lessons from other Creative Cities, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and cultural communities in the region
Specific works on marine and biosphere sciences, and global citizenship and education for sustainable development, heritage conservation	Use of/Access to information and communication technologies (ICT)

Table 10. PH NatCom's competitive advantages.

In terms of regional and international levels, as organized in Table 10 above, other NatComs can learn from the organizational structure of PH NatCom with **specific focus on the inclusion of national experts on UNESCO's thrust in the country as Commissioners**. While at the local and national level, the increased staff number and trainings to further develop skill sets of staff are seen as entry-points for improvement at the regional and international levels, having a lean team with specific and clear cut skill sets are seen as a competitive advantage.

According to a former PO, some NatComs have smaller number of staff compared to PH NatCom.

A former PO opined that PH NatCom seems to be taking a more proactive stance during regional and international events compared to other NatComs. She further shared that the best practices here in the Philippines in terms of managing UNESCO's projects and programmes can be extended to other NatCom's for their perusal. For former officials, this shall be NatCom's work on *marine and biosphere sciences, global citizenship and education for sustainable development*.

As the Organization strives to step up at the international level, former POs and institutional partners said that *the Philippine government must further support its NatCom* just like in the case of Korean counterpart who receives plenty of resources, particularly on the financial aspect. This relates to former PO's observation on the need for PH NatCom *to further explore and access more alternative funding sources* other than the Philippine government to deliver its projects. Former POs suggested that *partnerships with UNESCO Regional Offices and other NatComs in the region must be fortified*. It was raised that there is a tendency for regional and international partners to by-pass PH NatCom's authority and directly communicate with the local partner in the Philippines, and only involve PH NatCom when the project needs trouble-shooting. In another matter, other NatComs specifically within the region can also be a source of information of their best practices in which PH NatCom can learn from, specifically in programmes and projects that are under the Culture sector. Ultimately, former officials and institutional partners mentioned that other NatComs in the region who are *more advanced in harnessing ICT in its work can assist PH NatCom* in its work for the country.

PH NATCOM'S INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OVER TIME

Despite institutional challenges, such as the lean staff complement for an Office with evolved and expanded functions, UNACOM took great bounds and leaps to

ensure that it strictly adhered to its mission and vision. It also ensured to align its goals as a **consultative and liaison body with UNESCO's work in education, the sciences, culture, and communication.**

UNACOM created avenues for international-local collaboration and ensured the **country's representation in key events abroad as well as the promotion of UNACOM Programmes at the local level.** Its partners significantly benefitted from the training, networking, and pro-active coordination initiated in previous years. Through stronger and more meaningful partnerships, UNACOM implemented highly collaborative and relevant programs, projects, and activities.

In 2017, UNACOM focused on cascading to its partners the priority programs of UNESCO. Along with the UNACOM team, selected Philippine delegates actively participated in, and contributed to, local and international fora, meetings, and **training related to the Commission's mandate. The main highlight was the participation of the Philippine delegation to the 39th General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, France, where the Philippines was elected as one of the 58 members of the Executive Board whose main functions are to examine the programme of work and budget of UNESCO, and guide the Organization's support to Member States in the implementation of relevant SDGs in education, culture, sciences, communication and information.**

In 2018, UNACOM and its allies worked tirelessly to go above and beyond their calling. It was with hard work, determination, and love for the country that allowed them to make worthwhile achievements that not only encourage meaningful cooperation and expand support to their stakeholders but also inspire them to better understand and appreciate the need for collective efforts in pursuit of sustainable development.

In 2019, UNACOM continued to create avenues for international-local collaboration **and ensured the country's representation in key events abroad as well as the promotion of UNACOM Programmes at the local level.** It also continued bridging the Philippines with the 2030 SDGs through UNESCO initiatives and programs. UNACOM has expanded its networks to ensure

inclusivity, equality and development will bring actual benefits to Filipinos, especially at the grassroots level.

Following the results from the primary data, it is observable that works for the promotion of quality education is consistent with the reported PH NatCom's priorities on lifelong learning, the achievement of Education for All (EFA) and Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), and now, the achievement of quality education for all, especially through global citizenship. Moreover, while reports accumulated mainly pertains to work in Education, Culture, and the Social and Human Sciences Sectors, the primary data revealed that PH NatCom's works in Natural Sciences are the most effective and consistent throughout decades. Furthermore, it is observable that while PH NatCom has reported an increasing number of local projects and international participation, generation of more funding to support or host regional and international gatherings became more challenging compared to the past decades. Factors that contribute to this include insufficient government financial support, the tedious and bureaucratic processes involved in fund generation that sometimes dissuade potential partners, and the need to further synergize partnerships within UNESCO family and other Member-States in terms of resource allocation or sharing for different programmes such as the World Heritage, Creative Cities, and other cultural communities.

THE FUTURE (OF) PH NATCOM

This section will present the aspirations of participants for PH NatCom in the coming years and the list of their suggested mechanisms in order to achieve them. These are summarized in the Table 11 below.

The participants mainly aspire for PH NatCom to improve on the nine areas listed in the Table below. They aspire for its intra-organizational development, enhanced contribution to national development goals, and increased participation in the international stage.

ASPIRATIONS FOR PH NATCOM	INITIAL THEME	MAIN THEME
Establishment of monitoring and evaluating division, and satellite offices	INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Participants aspire for PH NatCom's intra-organizational development, enhanced contribution to the national development goals, and increased international participation.
Retooling of a more grass-roots approach relative to its thrusts		
Inclusion of more Philippine elements and sites in UNESCO inscriptions	ENHANCED CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS	
Increased participation to UNESCO Prizes		
A more established avenue for Filipino youth participation		
A recognized partner of Philippine tri-education agencies in pursuit of SDG4 in the country		
Continued sharing of Philippines' best practices at the regional and international levels	INCREASED INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION	
Filipino experts taking an active role in the international scene through projects and collaborations		
An active, inclusive knowledge-sharing and policy-recommending body to UNESCO and its bodies		

Table 11. List of participants' aspirations for PH NatCom

To achieve this, institutional partners from the academe look at giving focus on **policy development and creating academies aligned with UNESCO's thrusts**. Target-based budgeting and community-based planning of PH NatCom for multi-year are also suggested. Former and current officials sees the organization's representation and participation to UNESCO events at the international level as also a means to realize these aspirations.

For former PH NatCom workers, these can be achieved (1) when the Organization will have more permanent positions to make it more attractive for additional highly-competent staff; (2) when the current and future members of the Commission sustain their commitment and dedication; (3) when the Organization has crafted more relevant projects that benefit more communities especially at the grassroots; and (4) when wider audience has been reached through various platforms beyond utilizing social media and publications.

PH NATCOM THEN, NOW, AND IN THE FUTURE

In recent decades, former Secretary-General (SecGen) Ambassador Preciosa Soliven emphasized in a number of her broadsheet pieces from 2002 – 2018 the significant contributions of PH NatCom in universalizing the right to education. She had led PH NatCom in mainly centering its efforts on the promotion and institutionalization of lifelong learning. Recalling the developments of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and the 2000 World Education Forum, she emphasized that each country's unique history and culture do not complicate the development of educational solutions, but provide starting points for solution. It is in this view that the PH NatCom had organized the Regional Conference on Universalizing the Right to Education of Good Quality: A Rights-based Approach to Achieving Education for All in 2002 with UNESCO Bangkok, SEAMEO-Innotech, and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Countries from Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Timor-Leste) had participated. The event examined post-2000 World Education Forum developments focusing on the process of meeting EFA goals and implementing policies at the national level.

To further invigorate country's contribution to ensuring the achievement of EFA, the PH NatCom had also played significant role in the promotion of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development Goals (DESD). It led a national conference in 2005 that prepared the detailed roadmap towards achieving ESD. Among its significant outcomes was the establishment of the Southeast Asian Center for Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development (SEA-CLLSD) as a Category 2 Center under the auspices of UNESCO in the country. Eight Southeast Asian countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, and the Philippines) were convinced that the Centre could also contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after their visit to the Operation Brotherhood Mostessori Center, Inc. (OBMCI) – an educational institution that former SecGen Soliven founded. This was later designated as the Philippine education's national laboratory to address the life-

skills educational requirements for reaching the (DESD) (Soliven, 2007).

Efforts in establishing the Centre had also directed the prioritization of quality education and lifelong learning in the Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan (2004-2010). These lifelong learning initiatives through the said Centre were beneficial to the institutionalization of existing ESD programs in the Department of Education (DepEd), the LGUS, and the agriculture sector. Among these are the **following: DepEd's Accreditation and Equivalency System** – a certification of learning for Out-of-School Filipino youths and adults aged 15 and above, the Molave Youth Home (MYH) programme that provides educational programs to youth offenders age 9 – 18 years old, and basic course on entrepreneurial development program.

In 2011, former SecGen Virginia Miralao was appointed by the Philippine President as the Secretary-General of PH NatCom. A renowned Filipino social scientist, she led the PH NatCom in bolstering efforts under the Social and Human Sciences Sector through workshops/seminars/conferences, research and publications with cross-sectional works with the Culture, Natural Sciences, Education, and Communication and Information sectors. She continued PH **NatCom's work on contributing to the achievement of EFA and the promotion** of lifelong learning as a Governing Board Member of the SEA-CLLSD, the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP). Moreover, promotion and re-appreciation of World Heritage Program was also prioritized (Ateneo de Manila University, 2013; Department of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

With the increasing commitments and roles of PH NatCom, she detailed in the **office's proposed rationalization** plan in 2013 the current functions of the organization. These are the following: a) **monitoring the Philippines' compliance** with UNESCO international declarations, conventions and agreements (10 ratified and 28 non-ratified); b) developing project proposals **along UNESCO's program** thrusts and executing/implementing these nationally; c) promoting awareness and appreciation of UNESCO ideals; d) **maintaining and supporting NatCom's**

network of partners to help advance knowledge and appreciation of UNESCO programs and advocacies, including the ASPNet and UNESCO Clubs, etc; and e) attending to Secretariat functions. With these functions, she affirmed that:

“the evolution and expansion of UNESCO’s programmes and activities over time have intensified cooperation, ties and relations between the NatCom and the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris and Field Offices; diversified the range of activities and programmes carried out within UNESCO’s sectors of competence in addition to fostering new intersectoral collaborations; and multiplied significantly NatCom’s partner agencies/organizations within and outside government, as well as subnationally, nationally, regionally and globally”
(Miralao, 2013, p. 3.).

She raised, however, that the PH NatCom Secretariat’s current internal structure is *imbalanced* in the sense that it “is heavy on administrative positions but severely lacking in technical positions... which significantly affected its efficiency and overall performance” (Miralao, 2013, p. 8). At the moment, there are eight positions for the administrative and accounting functions, while only four positions are dedicated for technical matters. The two being the Deputy Executive Director and the Secretary-General positions.

Other than this organization structure challenge, the PH NatCom had also identified internal emerging challenges it faced in 2015. These identified challenges include the need to:

- establish a monitoring system for programs and activities;
- improve coordination in programming/planning fund utilization and accomplishing the liquidation reports;
- be more proactive and cooperative to achieve NatCom goals and commitments
- clarify accountabilities; and

- properly channel complaints and come up with corresponding recommendations or solutions to improve the situation.

Corresponding to these identified organization structure and internal challenges were the transitions in the global and national goals, and of leadership in NatCom. The 2030 Agenda was launched in 2015 together with the crafting of the first evidence-based long-term national development agenda called the Vision 2040. Succeeding the leadership of former SecGen Miralao, then Officer-in-Charge Lindsay Barrientos underscored the relevance of UNESCO and NatComs in this crucial time. She emphasized that the PH NatCom bridged the gap between government ministries and groups to advance the 2030 Agenda. She mentioned that PH NatCom seeks to maximize opportunities to further improve its data collection and analysis in building the foundation for program implementation. Research is an area which she thinks should be integral to the Organizations core functions, however, limited resources and multiple tasks and functions have caused research to be de-prioritized. Improvement in these areas will be beneficial in its promotion of UNESCO and UNACOM thrusts and in its work with appropriate partners for the effective implementation of and stronger engagement in UNESCO projects and programmes in the Philippines. She views the effective partnership of PH NatCom with the youth sector as an opportunity for Filipino youth engagement in UNESCO. The youth, especially through UNESCO Clubs that PH NatCom oversees, is a formidable partner to contribute to meaningful changes and impactful initiatives not just at the international and national levels, but most importantly, at the grassroots level.

Incorporating insights from other NatComs with PH NatCom’s experience, former SecGen Lila Ramos-Shahani recommended in Regional Meetings of NatComs the following points to enhance the work of NatComs around the world:

- Freedom of action and functional autonomy;
- Ability to outreach and mobilize governmental and non-governmental actors;
- Capacity to promote inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral cooperation;
- Effective leadership and adequate staffing; and

- Mutually-supportive relations with Permanent Delegations and UNESCO Field/Cluster Offices.

Former SecGen Shahani stressed the importance of strengthening interactions and partnerships among National Commissions and improving cooperation between National Commissions and the UNESCO Secretariat. She stated that the UNESCO Secretariat should be more accountable to and cooperative with National Commissions by providing communication materials, and the National Commissions should utilize them more actively to implement UNESCO activities domestically.

Ultimately, current Officer-in-Charge Undersecretary Ernesto Abella puts emphasis on nation-building through strong and sustained partnership and cooperation at all levels – grassroots, national, regional, and international. He reiterated that at the country level, the National Commissions are regarded as invaluable assets for UNESCO in achieving its mandate, particularly in the implementation of the SDGs. PH NatCom, in particular, endeavors to ensure that **it maximizes the Philippines’ engagement with UNESCO and advances UNESCO Programmes** in the country. Thus, it seeks to further increase networks and partnerships to bridge UNESCO with governmental and non-governmental organizations, including youth movements and community-based organizations.

To optimize PH NatCom’s contribution to UNESCO’s SDG targets, it is vital to weave the Commission’s programmes with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP). Thus, PH NatCom ensured that for 2019, its programmes, projects, and activities have been contributing and aligning to both the 2030 Agenda and the PDP.

Furthermore, Usec. Abella shared that PH NatCom envisions nation building to be powered by lifelong learners - Filipinos equipped with 21st century skills to engage in meaningful and rewarding careers that contribute to personal **development as well as to the country’s attainment of sustainable development** goals. He believes that these would-be efforts are something magical: as we work together for a common vision of a peaceable human community where

each one has a place, and while we will treasure our individual identities, we will also embrace our larger identity as humans living respectfully with one another, and all together with Nature itself. PH NatCom has been vital for the inscription and monitoring of Philippine sites and elements inscribed in UNESCO programmes. Complete list can be viewed in Appendix C.

The aspirations of participants for intra-organizational development, enhanced contribution to national development goals, and increased international participation complements the vision of the current Administration on working towards a strong and sustained partnerships and cooperation at all levels to overcome challenges and demands of time. These can be achieved more promptly when all aspects, especially technical, administrative and operational are aligned. It starts with people - sustaining the positive attitude of the workforce that believes in the contribution their Organization to UNESCO and to Philippine Government and local communities. These people that propels the growth and functioning of PH NatCom must attain increase not just in size but also in opportunities to further be capacitated in terms of research, writing, networking, and optimizing social media in the pursuit of its thrusts.

More importantly, it must also be underscored that fulfilling PH NatCom's roles and mandates means that while the country aspires for a better future, it continues to uphold and nurture the fundamental rights and freedoms which have been championed centuries ago in France, and which notable Filipino personalities in history had fought for. It continues the legacy of inspiring other nations in advancing women's and girls' rights, lifelong learning, evidence-based policies, nature and heritage conservation, and democratic processes that build the nation. In light of the challenges brought about by the pandemic which also in some ways set limitations for this research, it also needs to be stressed that this reflection exercise emphasized the need for PH NatCom to further harness the tools available in the digital era in order to connect more, to sustain its **relevance, and to perform its evolving roles. While PH NatCom's substantive works over decades can mainly be attributable to the aspirations, skills, and talents of peoples and leaders who are and become part of it, the proactive and unrelenting support from the national government, the UNESCO bodies, and its**

partners can exponentially grow its contribution to the national and global agenda.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This section will present the key takeaways in this research vis-à-vis the objectives set to know the impacts of PH NatCom's evolving roles and goals.

Work condition. Close personal and professional relationship exists in PH NatCom amid difference in personalities. Gender balance, geographic and inter-generational representation are features of the organization that espouse diversity. Workers have varied perception and experience in terms of their workload but remain having a **positive outlook on PH NatCom's work.**

Evolving mechanisms. Existing organizational mechanisms are products of confluence of internal and external factors. The primary data collected validated and revealed the organizational structure and internal challenges that were identified from pieces of literature. Decision-making, project vetting and implementation went from a technocratic, top-down approach to a more democratic, but loosely structured method. Commissioners are mandated and proven to play significant role in the goal-setting of each Committee. The current situation of PH NatCom highlights the flexibility of the current Secretariat to perform roles that are beyond its official mandates (technical and secretarial arm), but also reveals the need to augment their number (with plantilla or permanent positions), knowledge, and skills. These improvements were seen as vital in order to effectively perform the roles of the whole PH NatCom in both situations where Commissioners are completely appointed or not. Also, its evolving mechanisms created a positive image to its institutional partners.

Strengths and Weaknesses. The strength of PH NatCom mainly emanates from its long history of working with experts and different communities which needs to be sustained by highly-experienced and competent staff. It also comes from the close personal and professional relationship that exists within the

organization amid diversity in ascribed and achieved statuses. The works and priorities in the organization tend to shape **participants' personal advocacies** such as lifelong learning, heritage conservation, and quality education for all which they promote or share with other people beyond work. The weakness emanates from the need to add more to the team and to strengthen its capacity on project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Another weakness is the limits to its creativity and flexibility as it has to comply with various layers of bureaucratic processes and guidelines. This leads to less partners and less opportunities to expand network as some groups or potential partners who aspire for more creativity and flexibility are discouraged by the tedious processes and requirements.

Perceived roles of PH NatCom. It is perceived as performing all roles that is expected in a NatCom as stipulated in UNESCO Constitution, but less as an advisory body and as a programme and project management body. Meanwhile, it is also perceived as having extra roles such as a repository of updated database of Filipino experts, as a champion of the 2030 Agenda, and a grant-giving institution to implement projects under UNESCO thrusts. It can be inferred that **these are outcomes of PH NatCom's long history of engaging with prime intellectuals and movers of the Philippine society over generations, sustaining its relevance as an active institution that contributes to the achievement of global goals.**

Perceived performance of PH NatCom. Its work on advancing education and in promotion of gender equality in the country since the MDGs is widely recognized. This reflects the sustained efforts of promoting these advocacies amid change of internal leadership in recent decades. Equally, PH NatCom is also acknowledged as a prime agency that contributes to the fulfillment of SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. This acknowledgment comes with a greater expectation of maintaining and increasing its efforts towards achieving the formerly mentioned SDG. It is also acknowledged that environmental works related to the realization of MDG 7, and then SDGs 13 and 14 have been consistent. Due to the on-going pandemic, PH NatCom is also advised to retool and contribute more on the efforts to achieve SDG 3: Good Health and Well-

Being, which becomes the foundation of the updated Philippine Development Plan that now targets to build healthier and resilient Filipino communities. There are a number of ways that PH NatCom can consider to improve its overall work on SDGs. Some are listed in Table 9.

In terms of UNESCO Programmes, it is in Natural Sciences that PH NatCom is perceived as creating its most significant impact, followed by Culture and Education. Change in leadership results to change in priorities that have both positively and negatively affected the development of each sector. At the other end, Communication and Information has been the least explored and innovative sector of PH NatCom. Works in Education and Culture must be sustained. In line with the pandemic, it is recommended for PH NatCom to re-evaluate its priorities to make itself relevant.

Individual and Organizational Influences. Data analyzed revealed that while PH NatCom contributes to the achievement of global and national agenda in the recent decades, it also brings intra- and inter-personal development skills to its workers and partners. Working in/with PH NatCom allows optimization of one's potential which also contributes to the development of the Organization. This makes working in PH NatCom recommendable – as it is also *fulfilling, a learning opportunity, gives a lot of opportunities and expands one's network, and an effective form of service to the nation and global community.*

Competitive advantages. At the local and national levels, it is observable that works for the promotion of quality education mentioned by respondents is consistent with the reported PH NatCom's priorities on lifelong learning, the achievement of EFA and DESD, and now, the achievement of quality education for all at all times, especially through global citizenship. PH NatCom's unique mandates on Education and Culture Sectors increase its potential to contribute to the advancement of advocacies under them. Meanwhile, PH NatCom's works in Natural Sciences are the most effective and consistent throughout decades. Its wide multi-stakeholder network makes establishment of platforms for collaborations and creation of spaces for dialogue easier compared to other national and local offices. This means that its potential to contribute to the

updated PDP is also voluminous. At the current, PH NatCom has been vital for the inscription and monitoring of Philippine sites and elements inscribed in UNESCO programmes. Complete list can be viewed in Appendix C.

At the regional and international levels, other NatComs can learn from PH NatCom's **organizational composition and its experience** in institutionalizing their respective Offices. Its proactive stance in international gatherings may be **emulated, too, at some extent. Moreover, PH NatCom's best practices**, particularly on marine and biosphere sciences, global citizenship education and education for sustainable development, and heritage conservation, may also give valuable insights to their respective countries.

Areas of improvement. PH NatCom can also learn from other NatComs in the regional and at the international levels experiences on UNESCO programmes, specifically those that are under the Culture Sector. It also needs to discover and harness partnerships that would improve its access to alternative funding and to ICT. Further, it is observable that while PH NatCom has reported an increasing number of local projects and international participation, its capacity to host regional and international gatherings has weakened compared to the past decades. Factors that contribute to this include insufficient government financial support, physical and natural constraints (when events have to be postponed or cancelled due to typhoons or natural disasters that struck the country/location of event) and the need to further synergize partnerships within UNESCO family and other Member-States, especially within the region.

Mechanisms for the achievement of organizational goals in the long run.

These include policy development, strategic planning and budgeting, and sustained efforts at the local and participation to international events that need commitment and dedication of staff. This would require work towards a strong and sustained partnerships and cooperation at all levels – grassroots, national, regional, and international – which the current OIC has emphasized as essential in this crucial time.

Evolving PH NatCom. While it must be underscored that the continued

relevance of PH NatCom over decades can be attributable to the aspirations, skills, and talents of peoples and leaders who are and become part of it, the burning desire to uphold and nurture the fundamental rights and freedoms which have been championed centuries ago in France, and which the most notable Filipino personalities in history had fought, is the light that guides them towards achieving a more peaceful and prosperous planet for peoples of this and future generations through the power of partnerships. In terms of partnerships, the proactive and unrelenting support from the national government, the UNESCO bodies, and its partners can exponentially grow its contribution to the national and global agenda. It is in this view that no matter what the passing challenges of the day are or will bring, it is imperative for PH NatCom to review its own narrative in order to continue its contribution in writing a more humane history of the nation, of the succeeding generations.

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APPENDIX A

PHOTOS



1. PH NatCom online Focus Group Discussion.



2. Meeting of NatComs.



3. PH NatCom with Korean youth visitors.



4. 2020 PH NatCom Secretariat.

APPENDIX B

TEMPLATE SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Work practices in UNACOM

- ❖ Please describe the demands of working in UNACOM.
- ❖ Please characterize your workmates in UNACOM. (internal)
 - What region did they come from? (diversity and representativeness)
 - What do/did you particularly like when you work with them in UNACOM? (internal and external)
 - If possible, please share the reason behind one of the challenges you encountered with your workmates/UNACOM staff. (internal and external)
- ❖ What mechanisms are/were available/utilized to deliver annual projects, programs, and activities?
 - How are projects vetted? (internal)
 - How are the partners being selected?
 - Who are/were the partners for the projects?
- ❖ What are the strengths of UNACOM Secretariat as a body?
- ❖ What are its points for improvements?

2) Personal values of resource persons that are/were influenced in working in/with UNACOM

- ❖ Please describe yourself before joining/working with UNACOM.
- ❖ Do you believe that working in/with UNACOM makes you a better person? Why or why not?
- ❖ What do you like the most about working in/with UNACOM? Your dislikes? (internal)
- ❖ Do you consider that working in/with UNACOM has a great impact on your life? Why or why not?

For those who are currently not part of UNACOM:

- ❖ If there is, how did UNACOM influence your decision in pursuing your current job? (internal)
- ❖ If given a chance, would you choose to work in/with UNACOM again?

3) Experience, opportunities, challenges/setbacks while working in/with UNACOM

- ❖ What are/were the opportunities in working in/with UNACOM?
- ❖ What are/were your remarkable insights and advocacy/ies that you share/d in/with UNACOM?
- ❖ How did/do you manage situations that you were not familiar with while working in/with UNACOM?
- ❖ What factors do contribute to unusual/exceptional situations you encounter/ed while in/working with UNACOM?
- ❖ Would you recommend working in/with UNACOM? Why or why not?
- ❖ Please give advice to future workers of UNACOM.

4) UNACOM's competitive advantages at the local, national, and regional levels

- ❖ In which part of the national development plan (NDP) do you believe does/did UNACOM contribute the most?
 - Which part of the NDP you think does UNACOM need to work on/wished could have worked on?
 - Are there works in UNACOM that are not included in NDP? If yes, what are these?
 - Working with/in UNACOM, what are your insights in order to achieve a strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure life?
- ❖ Which MDGs/SDGs does/did UNACOM contribute the most?
 - Which SDGs do you think does UNACOM need to work on?
 - How can UNACOM improve its work on SDGs in the country? At the global level?
- ❖ What UNESCO programmes and projects do you believe does UNACOM perform well?
 - **Please share your work in realizing the UNESCO's thrusts at the global, regional, national, and local level – which are applicable.**

- While you were starting in your advocacy, what were the challenges you encountered in pursuing this advocacy? How did UNACOM help in solving/exacerbate this challenge?
- Please share your most memorable moment in working in/with UNACOM.
- In which areas would you like UNACOM to extend its efforts?
- Please share pointers for better service/programme delivery of UNACOM.

If being able to work for UNACOM at the regional and global level:

- ❖ What are the differences of PH NatCom compared to other NatComs/UNESCO networks in the region?
- ❖ In what areas can UNACOM extend its assistance/expertise with other NatComs/UNESCO networks in the region?
- ❖ In what areas does UNACOM need assistance/expertise of other NatComs/ UNESCO networks in the region?

5) Possible mechanisms to meet organizational goals in the long term

- ❖ How do you envision the work of UNACOM and UNESCO in the Philippines?
- ❖ What should/can be the contributions of the Philippines to UNESCO and its networks?
- ❖ How can these be attained?

APPENDIX C

LIST OF UNESCO-INSCRIBED SITES AND ELEMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

UNESCO-designated lists in the Philippines

World Heritage Sites

- Historic City of Vigan
- Baroque Churches of the Philippines
 - o San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila
 - o Santo Tomas de Villanueva Church in Miag-ao, Iloilo
 - o Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion Church in Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur
 - o San Agustin Church in Paoay, Ilocos Norte
- Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras
- Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park
- Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park
- Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary

Intangible Cultural Elements

- Hudhud chants of the Ifugao;
- Darangen epic of the Maranao people of Lake Lanao; and
- Tugging rituals and games (shared with South Korea, Vietnam, and Cambodia)
- Buklog, thanksgiving ritual system of the Subanen

Biosphere Reserves

- Puerto Galera Biosphere Reserve
- Palawan Biosphere Reserve
- Albay Biosphere Reserve

Memory of the World Registers

- Jose Maceda Collection
- The Presidential Papers of Manuel L. Quezon
- The Philippine Paleographs (Hanunuo, Buid, Tagbanua, Pala'wan)
- Radio Broadcast of the Philippine People Power Revolution
- Culion Leprosy Archives

UNESCO Creative Cities

- Baguio City, Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art
- Cebu City, Creative City of Design

UNESCO Learning Cities

- Learning City of Balanga

Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Dr. Utak CHUNG



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1.2.1. Establishment of the Korean National Commission

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References

FOREWORD

This report provides an overview of the history of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU), from its establishment to the present, and **offers consideration of KNCU's future priorities. The production and publication of this report, in the year that marks the 70th anniversary of the Republic of Korea's accession to UNESCO, has been an excellent and timely opportunity to reflect on where KNCU has come from and where it should aim to head, and I am very pleased to introduce the report to readers all around the world.**

While not all the suggestions within this report may be feasible at this moment or in the short-term, I hope that many of them will be realized in the future, through close consultation and partnership among the national commissions participating in the current Joint Project among National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia, and with other partners.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Utak CHUNG for producing this excellent report. By writing such a comprehensive report on our commission based on his professional experiences and insight, not least as a former member of KNCU, Dr. CHUNG has made a great contribution to the Joint Project.

I hope that readers find the report useful, both as an opportunity to learn about KNCU, its activities, and its future priorities, and as food for thought in consideration of the wider development of cooperation among national commissions and the entire UNESCO family.

KNCU will continue to work together with the other national commissions in East and Southeast Asia to strengthen regional, as well as international, cooperation among UNESCO family members, seeking a sustainable peace for all.

Kwangho KIM
Secretary-General
Korean National Commission for UNESCO

PROFILE OF THE KOREAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

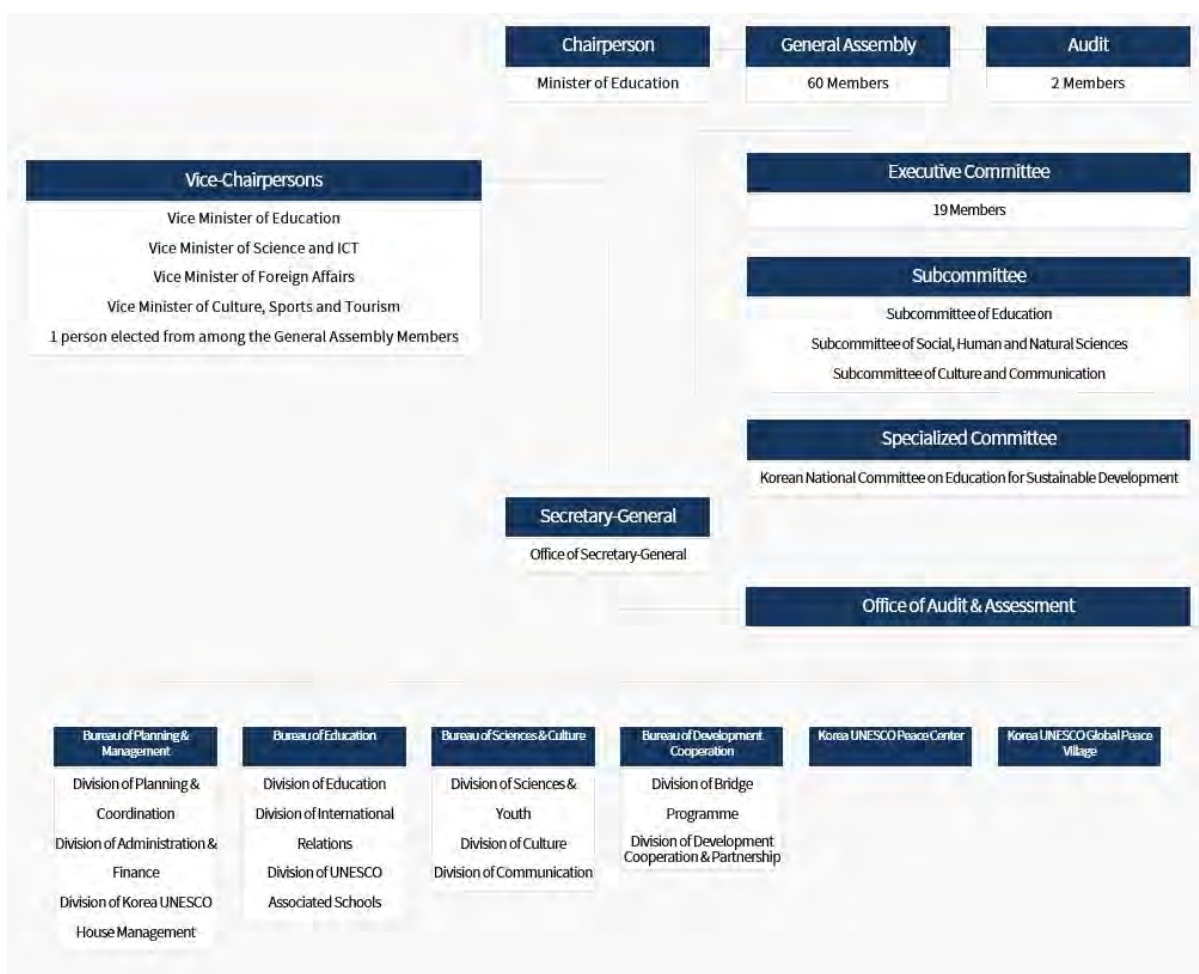
1. Basic information

- Date of establishment: January 30, 1954
- Purpose of establishment: to promote UNESCO activities in the Republic of Korea pursuant to Article 7 of the UNESCO Constitution, to facilitate exchanges and cooperation among UNESCO, the South Korean government, and institutions and organizations in relevant areas such as education, science and culture.
- Legal basis of establishment: UNESCO Activities Act (enacted on April 27, 1963)
- Secretary-General: Kwangho Kim (20th Secretary General, from December 26, 2016 to date)
- Structure and function
 - General Assembly
 - Budget and programme planning for the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (hereinafter “KNCU”)
 - Budget settlement and programme evaluation for KNCU
 - Election of vice chairperson and members of the Executive Committee, and appointment and dismissal of auditors
 - Matters relating to operational rules
 - Executive Committee
 - Drafting the agenda for the General Assembly
 - Establishing the plan for execution of matters agreed at the General Assembly and supervising the execution
 - Matters relating to appointment and dismissal of auditors as well as appointment and dismissal of General Assembly members
 - Matters relating to the recommendation of candidates for the position of Secretary General
 - Sub-committees
 - Planning and discussion of each sub-committee’s relevant

programmes

- Specialized Committee
- 2 auditors
- Secretariat
 - Execution of the programme and budget approved by the General Assembly, and execution of a variety of administrative tasks

■ Organizational chart



2. Budget structure (as of 2020)

- Total budget: KRW 17,168 million
- Sources of budget

Type of funds	Sources
Subsidies	(Central government) Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Ministry of Environment, Cultural Heritage Administration (Regional government) Jeju Island
Support from outside organizations	KOICA, Korean Studies Institute, International Centre for Documentary Heritage, UNESCO
Others	Sponsorship, profit-growth projects (assets, lease of facilities for the operation of the Korea UNESCO Global Peace Village)

3. Major functions and activities

- Coordination, support, cooperation for UNESCO activities in South Korea
- **Leading the 'SDG4 - Education 2030' agenda in South Korea**
- Cooperation for sustainable development of science
- Protecting cultural heritage and promoting cultural diversity
- Supporting capacity building in developing countries
- Promoting UNESCO activities in South Korea and issuing publications

1. PAST: HISTORY OF THE KOREAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

1.1 THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA'S ACCESSION TO UNESCO AND THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AT THE TIME⁵⁹

1.1.1 THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA'S ACCESSION TO UNESCO⁶⁰

On August 15, 1948, three years after Korea was liberated from Japan's colonial rule in 1945, the government of the Republic of Korea was officially established. However, due to the division of the Korean peninsula into two countries, the country was unable to join the United Nations. When the Republic of Korea came to understand that it was nevertheless possible for a non-UN member state to join specialized agencies of the UN, it started actively to pursue that path.

The Republic of Korea, not yet a UN member country, submitted its application to join UNESCO to the UN Economic and Social Council via the Australian delegation. At the time, in order for a non-UN member country to join any UN Specialized Agency, including UNESCO, it was necessary first to gain the approval of the UN Economic and Social Council and for the application to be reviewed by the UNESCO Executive Board, and then for the accession to be approved by two thirds of the member states in a vote at the UNESCO General Conference. This approval was granted at the 5th UNESCO General Conference, and the Republic of Korea became the 55th member state of UNESCO on June 14, 1950.

⁵⁹ Chapter 1 is based on the '50-year History of KNCU' (KNCU, 2004) and the '60-year History of KNCU' (KNCU, 2014)

⁶⁰ In sections 1.1. 'The Republic of Korea's Accession to UNESCO' and 1.2. 'Establishment of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO,' South Korea's full name, 'the Republic of Korea' has been used in general, but the shorter term 'Korea' has been used when it has been deemed more appropriate. In section 1.3. 'Major initiatives and activities of the Korean National Commission since its establishment,' generally the shorter form 'Korea' has been used, but should be read as referring to the Republic of Korea (i.e. South Korea).

1.1.2. IMPLICATIONS

(1) The start of the Republic of Korea's participation in international organizations

The Republic of Korea's joining of UNESCO on June 14, 1950 came very early in the history of the country's participation in international organizations. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was the only UN Specialized Agency that the Republic of Korea joined before UNESCO. The Republic of Korea filed its application for admission to the FAO on November 25, 1949, at the 5th General Conference of the FAO, and its admission was approved at the end of November. As Korea was a newborn nation, food issues were no doubt a top priority.

The Republic of Korea's accession to UNESCO, however, has symbolic meaning in that it was Korea's first time participating in an international organization's activities. When the country began taking part in UNESCO's activities as an official member nation, it was still very unfamiliar with the essence and workings of international organizations, and its participation helped it learn greatly.

(2) The beginning of the relationship with UNESCO: UNESCO's assistance during the Korean War

The Republic of Korea's admission to UNESCO led almost immediately to an unexpectedly good start to its relationship with the Organization, and an excellent example of international cooperation. 11 days after the Republic of Korea's accession to UNESCO, the Korean War broke out, which sent the newly liberated nation, already lagging behind in almost all aspects, straight back to the agonies of war. Fortunately, UNESCO quickly decided to provide educational assistance to its new member. As in the saying "a friend in need is a friend indeed," this emergency assistance forged a true friendship between the Republic of Korea and UNESCO. During the war, UNESCO not only provided food support but also started a new initiative that it had not pursued before, to establish a textbook printing factory to provide textbooks, aimed at changing the country's future for the better. This served as a foundation for the Republic of Korea's

development, which the country could later repay by taking a leading role in UNESCO activities. The story of how the Republic of Korea started its journey with UNESCO has never been forgotten by the grateful Korean people.

1.2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KOREAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

1.2.1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KOREAN NATIONAL COMMISSION

The Republic of Korea became an official member of UNESCO on June 14, 1950, but was unable to take proper follow-up steps immediately owing to the outbreak of the Korean War. The Korean National Assembly's ratification of the UNESCO Constitution came two years after accession, at the 'refuge' National Assembly session when the 2nd National Assembly voted unanimously of pledging compliance with the UNESCO Constitution on November 10, 1952. Despite the chaos of the war, the Republic of Korea faithfully followed the democratic process of ratification. Finally, the declaration of 'Presidential Decree No. 801 to establish the Korean National Commission for UNESCO' was made on July 6, 1953. This provided the legal basis for KNCU's establishment, three years after the Republic of Korea joined UNESCO. On January 30, 1954, the members gathered at Seoul National University and the very first KNCU General Assembly was held, officially launching the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

1.2.2. IMPLICATIONS

(1) Autonomy of the Commission and the Secretariat

In most other member states, the national commission for UNESCO and its secretariat belong to a government department. However, from the beginning, the Republic of Korea made KNCU and its secretariat a stand-alone body independent from government ministries. Although the Minister of Education serves as the chairperson of KNCU, and the Ministry of Education supervises the overall affairs of KNCU as ministry in charge, the Secretariat has strong autonomy in dealing with the details of the commission's work.

The establishment of the commission and its secretariat as a separate independent body from its inception was presumably because, first, the Korean government and Korean society gave high regard to UNESCO, and second, the intellectuals and government officials who led the establishment found it more desirable to let professionals with appropriate skills deal with the international administrative affairs and diplomatic affairs involved in work related to an international organization, as this work needed to be done in English and they were not familiar with it.

(2) Human Resources

The first Secretary-General (the position name was Director-General at the time) of KNCU was Dr. Jeong Dae-wi, who was a good fit for work concerning an international organization as he was fluent in English and had studied abroad. The appointment of an expert from academia as the first Secretary-General, served as a precedent when appointing subsequent Secretaries-General, and it became a tradition of KNCU to pick an academic intellectual rather than an administrator as its Secretary-General. So far, 14 out of 18 (80%) of the Secretaries-General of KNCU have been eminent academics. This also influenced the development of a tradition within KNCU of hiring experts with significant knowledge on education, science and culture as employees of the secretariat. KNCU was able to develop as it has thanks greatly to these excellent, highly-qualified human resources.

(3) Learning about democracy

Through KNCU's activities, the Republic of Korea experienced the culture of respecting collective intelligence and consensus, and this helped democracy take root in Korean society. This tradition continued in the 1990s, with KNCU introducing the concepts and values of human rights, tolerance, universal ethics, and consensus.

(4) Learning about international organizations and widening perspectives on the world

By taking part in various international conferences, such as the UNESCO General Conference and Executive Board meetings, the Republic of Korea started to learn how meetings work within multilateral organizations and what kinds of culture they have. International organizations were usually organized and operated based on cultural traditions of the West, and UNESCO was a place where Koreans could learn about such organizations. UNESCO explicitly and implicitly played a **role in widening Koreans' perspectives and views in relation to the world**. The Korean version of the UNESCO Courier⁶¹, which was issued from 1978 to 1996, was an important part of this.

1.3. MAJOR INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE KOREAN NATIONAL COMMISSION SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT

This section describes a selection of major initiatives since the establishment of KNCU, without classifying them by era. They have been selected as examples either because they relate to national commissions in the East Asian region or because it is thought that they could be of help to other national commissions.

1.3.1. ENACTMENT OF THE UNESCO ACTIVITIES ACT

The Republic of Korea enacted the UNESCO Activities Act in 1963, to provide a legal basis for UNESCO activities in Korea. The act granted significant autonomy to KNCU in terms of its organization, financing and programmes. This autonomy has greatly helped KNCU in the pursuit of its activities in Korea.

⁶¹ The Korean version of the UNESCO Courier was re-started in 2019.

1.3.2. ESTABLISHMENT OF FACILITIES: UNESCO HOUSE AND A TRAINING INSTITUTE

(1) UNESCO House

In November 1958, UNESCO Headquarters inaugurated its main building in Paris, France. It is assumed that this influenced Korea to start building a UNESCO house of its own. In April 1959, during the term of the second Secretary-General, Jang Nae-won, KNCU held the ground-breaking ceremony for the building of the Korean UNESCO House on a 1,346 m² lot in the middle of Myeongdong, Seoul. Eight years later, in February 1967, during the term of the 5th Secretary-General, Park No-tae, the building completion ceremony for Korea's UNESCO House was held.

Possessing its own building in Myeongdong, in downtown Seoul, made it possible for KNCU to leap into a new chapter. Thanks to the profits gained from renting out the building, KNCU could pursue educational, scientific and cultural projects on a larger scale and on a stable basis. UNESCO House has given KNCU a stable foundation on which to pursue activities at top-tier level for a national commission. This stable financial situation also meant that KNCU could hire top talent with the skills to handle projects well, and increase the number of its employees. The commission can hire up to 100 employees, all thanks to UNESCO House.

(2) Training institute

In the 1970s, KNCU established another physical asset – the UNESCO Youth Center, which was a training facility for adolescents. In 1974, during the term of Secretary-General Kim Gyu-taek, the commission borrowed 264,462 m² of national land in Icheon-gun (the current Icheon City) with the help of Gyeonggi Province, and started construction of the UNESCO Youth Center. The center was completed in 1976 and inaugurated on July 18, 1977, as the House of Youth. For 25 years, the center served as a cradle for youth activities in Korea. The UNESCO Youth Center changed its name to the UNESCO Culture Center in 2002, and then

to the UNESCO Peace Center in 2006. The center is a training center for international education and cultural exchange programmes such as the UN University Global Seminar. In the late 1990s, KNCU purchased 67,483 m² of the 264,462 m² **national land from the government, truly making the center KNCU's own institute.**

1.3.3. UNESCO SCHOOLS

UNESCO established the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) in 1953 to promote peace education and deepen international understanding around the world. Following a resolution reached at the 1st Korean UNESCO National Research Convention in 1960, four Korean schools joined UNESCO ASPnet in 1961, and this number increased to 17 schools by 1965, and 33 schools by 1975. **In 1971 and 1981, UNESCO ASPnet's Asian Conference was held in Seoul, Korea. In 1995, Korea's Ministry of Education designated KNCU as an Education Center for International Understanding to promote UNESCO ASPnet activities under the name of education for international understanding. As of 2020, 608 schools are part of ASPnet in Korea.**

1.3.4. KOREA YOUTH OVERSEAS VOLUNTEERS

In 1989, the Korean government put KNCU in charge of initiating the Korea Youth Overseas Volunteers Project. In 1990, after 4 months of training, a total of 48 first-round volunteers were dispatched to the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. In 1991, KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency) was established and took over this project, continuing the work first under the name of Korea Overseas Volunteers, and now under the name of World Friends Korea.

1.3.5. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NETWORKS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

From the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, KNCU actively **participated in UNESCO's science technology networks in Southeast Asia. The UNESCO Jakarta Office took the lead, establishing the Southeast Asian Microbiology Network in 1975 and the Southeast Asian Natural Product Chemistry Network in 1976. Korea's Herb**

Research Center at Seoul National University actively participated in the Southeast Asian Natural Product Chemistry Network, while the Microbiology Department at Seoul National University actively took part in Southeast Asian Microbiology Network, building relationships with scientists in Southeast Asia.

1.3.6. EAST ASIAN BIOSPHERE RESERVE NETWORK (EABRN)

From May 29 to June 2, 1995, KNCU organized a meeting in the Seorak Mountain area together with Seoul Education Culture Center to discuss the establishment of a Biosphere Reserve network in the Asia Pacific region, leading to the establishment of the UNESCO East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN). Currently there are 7 member countries, namely South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, North Korea, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan, actively pursuing cooperation and exchanges.

1.3.7. PROJECT SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ASIA PACIFIC⁶²

In 1997, KNCU started a project to support educational development in developing countries in Asia Pacific. KNCU began by conducting on-site project feasibility studies in 3 countries, namely Uzbekistan, Bhutan, and Cambodia. The commission provided USD 10,000 for the revision of Cambodian history textbooks, USD 12,000 to Vietnamese UNESCO ASPnet Schools for peace education, and USD 12,000 for the organization of the Korea-Mongolia International Youth Forum. The project was significant as this was KNCU's first ODA-type project.

1.3.8. EAST ASIA MEETING OF SECRETARIES-GENERAL OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

The UNESCO Beijing Office held the first 'East Asia Meeting of Secretaries-

⁶² This part is based on 'Supporting the educational development of developing countries in Asia Pacific' (KNCU, 1997)

General of National Commissions for UNESCO' in 1997, inviting 5 member states, namely China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea and South Korea. The meeting continued as an annual event until 2012. In 2001, the UNESCO Children's Performing Arts Festival in East Asia began (see below), and the two events were held almost simultaneously. In 2012, the UNESCO Children's Performing Arts Festival in East Asia was discontinued, and following this the meeting of secretaries-general became an ad-hoc event.

1.3.9. UNESCO CHILDREN'S PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL IN EAST ASIA

From 2001, during the term of Director-General Koichiro Matsuura, the UNESCO Beijing Office began **organizing the UNESCO Children's Performing Arts Festival** in East Asia on an annual basis. Primary and middle school children from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macao, Mongolia, North Korea and South Korea participated in this festival. Cities in East Asia took turns in hosting the festival, with the first being held in Beijing, the second in Fukuoka (2002), and the third in Suwon, Korea (2004). The seventh festival, in 2008, was also held in South Korea, in Gwangju. However, after Director-General Koichiro Matsuura's term came to an end, the festival discontinued.

1.3.10. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC CENTER OF EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING (APCEIU)

In 1995, as part of the globalization initiative of Korea's new civilian government, the Ministry of Education designated KNCU as Korea's Education Center for International Understanding. This led KNCU to establish a research association for education for international understanding, with a teacher-level group and a principal-level group. KNCU's active efforts in this area also included the publication of a policy report, university textbooks, and guidelines for elementary, middle and high schools on education for international understanding. Building on this progress, at the 29th session of the UNESCO General Conference in 1997, the head of the Republic of Korea delegation proposed to establish an Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) as a UNESCO Category 2 Center. In 1999 at the 30th session of the UNESCO General

Conference, the designation of APCEIU as a UNESCO Category 2 Center was approved, and in August 2000, APCEIU organized a symposium in Seoul to celebrate its official launch. APCEIU closely cooperated with KNCU from 2001 to 2010, having its Seoul office in KNCU's UNESCO House and using the Icheon UNESCO Culture Center (the current UNESCO Peace Center) as its head office and research center. In 2010, it established its own building in Guro-dong, Guro-gu, Seoul, from where it has continued to actively promote peace and culture based on education for international understanding.

1.3.11. WORLD HUMANITIES FORUM (2011~2012)

KNCU and UNESCO Headquarters co-organized the 1st World Humanities Forum in Busan on November 24-26, 2011. The purpose of the World Humanities Forum was to gather wisdom from experts in the liberal arts to better address the challenges facing humanity and to provide a forum for discussion among intellectuals from all over the world. KNCU independently organized the 2nd World Humanities Forum in Busan on November 1-3, 2012. After the second forum, **Korea's National Research Foundation took over the job** and has since held the forum biannually.

1.3.12. HISTORICAL RECONCILIATION FORUM (1997/ 2007~2011)

In 1997, KNCU and the German National Commission for UNESCO jointly organized an international forum on 21st century history education and history textbooks. The purpose of the forum was to provide an opportunity to share experiences of how Germany and France and Poland successfully revised their history textbooks with the aim of historical reconciliation, and to find ways to **revise Japan and Korea's history textbooks. Building on this forum, KNCU and Korea's Northeast Asian History Foundation jointly organized the International Forum on Historical Reconciliation in East Asia every year from 2007 to 2011.** The forum was re-named the International Youth Forum on Historical Reconciliation in 2012 and was held every year until 2016.

1.3.13. BRIDGE PROGRAMME

KNCU began its Bridge Programme in 2010, with an initial stage that targeted 18 communities in 6 African countries, namely the Lesotho, Malawi, Republic of South Africa, Rwanda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Building on this programme, in 2013, KNCU selected and appointed some former Bridge Programme volunteers as **Bridge Coordinators**, to act as field coordinators for the programme's second stage. The Bridge Programme was then divided into the Bridge Africa Programme and the Bridge Asia Programme and has continued successfully to date.

2. PRESENT: CURRENT INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE KOREAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The 'Present' in this Chapter refers to the years 2018, 2019 and 2020.

2.1. KEY INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

2.1.1. OPERATION OF THE KOREAN SDG4 - EDUCATION 2030 CONSULTATIVE GROUP⁶³

The International Education Cooperation Officer at the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Education is the national coordinator for the implementation of SDG4 - Education 2030 in Korea, while KNCU is the organization in charge of its overall administration. To achieve the global education agenda goals of SDG4- Education 2030, the Ministry of Education and KNCU have jointly established and operate the SDG4 - Education 2030 Consultative Group.

The process for the establishment of the consultative group was as follows. In 2017, Korea's Ministry of Education and KNCU put together a working group for the implementation of SDG4 - Education 2030 in Korea, based on which, in May

⁶³ This part is based on the Current Status of Korea's Work Towards SDG4 (KNCU-Korean Educational Development Institute, 2019). 'SDGs' stands for the Sustainable Development Goals, the global agenda adopted by United Nations in 2015. K-SDGs stands for 'Korea - Sustainable Development Goals,' a version of the SDGs adapted for the South Korean context.

2018, 10 organizations, namely KNCU, the Korean Educational Development Institute, the National Institute for Lifelong Education, UNESCO APCEIU, the Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation, the Korea Education and Research Information Service, the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, the Korea Council for University Education, the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training, and the Korea Women's Development Institute signed an MOU. This was the official start of the SDG4 - Education 2030 Consultative Group.

Besides the organizations mentioned above, the Ministry of Education (International Education Cooperation Office, and Educational Statistics Division) and Statistics Korea (Statistics Research Institute, and Statistics Training Institute) also participate in the SDG4 - Education 2030 Consultative Group. Each organization in the consultative group also operates a separate working group for the particular area of the agenda that they are focusing on, to discuss **matters relating to the setting of Korea's goals** and indicators for each area.

The SDG4 - Education 2030 Consultative Group has carried out a number of activities since its establishment in 2017. One example is the activities of the K-SDGs Private-Public-Academic Joint Working Group. All organizations in the consultative group also participate in the K-SDGs Private-Public-Academic Joint **Working Group, which put together the draft targets and indicators for Korea's** implementation of K-SDG4, based on which the K-SDG4 targets and indicators were finally set.

The SDG4 - Education 2030 Consultative Group has also created working groups on disseminating information to raise awareness about each target of the Education 2030 agenda, and has pursued various activities for implementation in Korea. The consultative group as a whole also organized an SDG4 - Education 2030 Forum each year from 2017 to 2019. The first forum, held in 2017, had the **theme of 'Education in Korea and SDG4 - Education 2030.'** The second forum took place in 2018 with the theme of 'Quality in higher education and vocational training for sustainable development.' The third forum was held in 2019 with the **theme of 'Inclusiveness and education.'** Forums were also held for target-specific working groups, contributing to the expansion of academic discussion in each

area. In addition, the SDG4 - Education 2030 Consultative Group produced and published 11 information cards to raise awareness about SDG4.

2.1.2. BRIDGE PROGRAMME⁶⁴

To build on the successes of the Bridge Programme in both Africa and Asia during its first phase, from 2010 to 2020, KNCU began devising a second phase of the programme during 2018 and 2019. In 2020, KNCU started phase 2 of the programme first in Lao PDR, Timor-Leste, and Bhutan. In 2021, Malawi (where phase 1 of the programme ended in 2018) will join phase 2, and the programme will expand further into other ASEAN countries starting from 2022. Phase 2 of the Bridge Programme is based on cooperation between KNCU and the partner **countries' National Commissions for UNESCO. To enhance** effectiveness and impact, the period for implementation of projects under the programme was increased from 1 year to multiple years (5 years). Budget for the programme was also significantly increased, helping the partner countries to do more towards achievement of SDG4, and in particular, strengthening the right to basic education for the educationally underprivileged.

The first phase of Bridge Africa Programme, which has continued since 2010, will come to an end after 2020. KNCU has been phasing out the programme country by country over the period from 2018 to 2020 (phase-out order: Malawi, Lesotho in 2018 / Zambia, Rwanda in 2019 / Eswatini, Botswana in 2020), conducting evaluation on progress made and working to increase the local sustainability of the education activities provided in each country under phase 1.

Meanwhile, improvement work on Bridge Asia Programme is underway, linking **the programme to the Korean government's UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize.** In 2018-2019 India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar took part in the programme. In 2020 India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are part of the programme.

⁶⁴ This part is based on the 2018 Bridge Programme Annual Report (KNCU, 2019).

2.1.3. UNESCO EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) PROGRAMME

To systematically roll out Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Korea, KNCU established the UNESCO Korea Commission for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD Commission) in August 2009. The ESD Commission consists of 20 members from government, institutes and other relevant organizations designated by the Minister of Education. The commission has regular meetings twice a year to work on ESD policy-making, development of research, education and training projects on ESD, promote implementation in Korea, and enhance international cooperation.

KNCU has implemented a programme that provides certification of UNESCO Official Projects for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD Official Projects) since 2011. This programme identifies and promotes examples of ESD projects pursued by public and private institutes and schools in Korean society and develops a Korea-specific ESD model to spread across Korea and beyond. This has contributed to the spread of the values of sustainable development in and outside of Korea. In 2019, a total of 28 projects (11 new, 17 extended) received certification as ESD Official Projects.

KNCU conducts research and organizes forums for ESD policy-making and awareness-raising to help make ESD a mainstream topic in Korea's education policies. The commission also translates and publishes major ESD-related reports and teachers' study materials for circulation in schools, educational institutes, and civil society, in order to raise awareness about ESD. In 2019, KNCU also organized a UNESCO ESD Policy Forum under the theme of 'Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 - How can Korea be ready?'

2.1.4. ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO, AND EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA MEETING OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

On September 19-21, 2018, KNCU organized the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting of

National Commissions for UNESCO in Gyeongju, Korea. More than 100 delegates attended the meeting, including Secretaries-General of 30 national commissions, section heads and officials from UNESCO Headquarters, heads of UNESCO Regional Offices, and members of Category 2 Centers in the region. The participants shared information and discussed how to strengthen cooperation among members of the UNESCO family in the region. It was the first Asia-Pacific regional meeting of national commissions for UNESCO since 2010. An outcome document, the Gyeongju Recommendation, was adopted at the meeting, proposing to make the Asia-Pacific regional meeting of national commissions a regular event.

On August 28-30, 2019, KNCU organized the East and Southeast Asia Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO in Jeonju, Korea, attended by more than 70 delegates, including the Secretaries-General of national commissions for UNESCO of 5 Northeast Asian countries and 10 ASEAN member nations, officials from UNESCO Headquarters, heads of UNESCO regional offices and other relevant officials. The meeting provided a good opportunity to discuss specific ways to strengthen cooperation among national commissions, such as joint research and joint programmes.

2.1.5. UNESCO MEMORY OF THE WORLD TRAINING WORKSHOP

There is a significant amount of documentary heritage in UNESCO member states that contains valuable cultural memories, but is not well preserved or utilized for a variety of reasons, including lack of national attention, financial resources or know-how. UNESCO established its Memory of the World designation to encourage the preservation and use of such heritage and increase access to it. To help countries that are under-represented on the Memory of the World registers of documentary heritage, KNCU has organized capacity building workshops on Memory of the World designation since 2009, to leverage its international expert network and provide technical support on how to prepare a successful nomination for designation, as well as how to utilize heritage after designation. As shown in Table 1, from 2009 to 2020, KNCU organized 11 workshops in total, through which a large range of countries have received

support.

<Table 1> UNESCO Memory of the World Training Workshop

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2009: 10 countries in Asia Pacific participated / Icheon, Korea • 2011: 10 countries in Asia Pacific participated / Jakarta, Indonesia • 2012: 8 countries in Africa participated / Addis Ababa, Ethiopia • 2013: 8 countries in Asia Pacific participated / Phnom Penh, Cambodia • 2014: 7 countries in Asia participated / Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan • 2015: 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean participated / Kingston, Jamaica • 2016: 10 countries in Asia Pacific participated / Suva, Fiji • 2017: 9 countries in Africa participated / Windhoek, Namibia • 2018: 7 countries in Asia Pacific participated / Seoul, Korea • 2019: 7 countries in the Arab region participated / St. Paul's Bay, Malta • 2020: 8 countries in Asia Pacific participated / workshop held online |
|---|

The UNESCO Memory of the World Training Workshop is an ODA project providing practical support for designation of documentary heritage to countries in each region whose documentary heritage is under-represented on the Memory of the World Register. First, countries in the selected region that wish to attend the workshop are asked to prepare an application for designation on the Memory of the World registers for any potential item they deem worthy of designation. Both before and during the workshop, a group of international experts review, and suggest revisions and supplementations to the application document. In addition, the experts give information on the Memory of the World programme, discuss major issues, and personally provide advice to the participants. This series of workshops has successfully helped participating countries register a total of 21 items of documentary heritage on the Memory of the World registers, 10 items from 10 countries on the international register and 11 items from 10 countries on the Asia-Pacific and Latin American regional registers.

2.2. MAJOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

2.2.1. UNESCO GLOBAL NETWORK OF LEARNING CITIES (GNLC)

The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) is a network of cities putting into action the concept of lifelong education. The network began following a resolution reached at the 2013 UNESCO General Conference. The GNLC was officially launched in September 2015 at the 2nd International Conference on Learning Cities held in Mexico City. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is the organization in charge, and any administrative areas in the world with a population of more than 10,000 are eligible to join the network. Currently 229 cities from 64 countries are part of the network, including 50 cities in Korea, the highest number of members from a single country in the world.

2.2.2. UNESCO ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS PROJECT NETWORK (ASPNET)

UNESCO began its UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) in 1953, with the goal of promoting world peace and education for international understanding. Currently 11,500 schools from some 180 countries have joined ASPnet and taken part in its activities. **Korea's participation in ASPnet began in 1961**, when 4 schools joined the network following a resolution reached at the first UNESCO National Research Convention in 1960. As of 2020, 608 schools are part of ASPnet in Korea.

2.2.3. UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK (UCCN)

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) is a programme encouraging cities from different regions and with different income levels, capacities and population sizes to cooperate in the areas of culture and creativity. UNESCO started the UCCN in 2004 to foster the development of cultural assets and creativity-based cultural industries in cities and encourage economic, social and cultural development through inter-city cooperation.

UCCN member cities are designated in 7 different fields, namely handicrafts, folk

art, design, movies, gastronomy, literature, media art, and music. Currently 246 cities from 84 countries are the members of the network. 10 Korean cities, including Seoul, are part of the UCCN.

2.2.4. UNESCO CHAIRS AND UNITWIN

UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN are programmes designed to help realize **UNESCO's ideals by building capacities and networks through the promotion of exchanges and cooperation among organizations for higher education.** These programmes were adopted at the 26th UNESCO General Conference in 1992.

UNITWIN helps two or more universities or institutes for higher education work together. UNESCO Chairs are usually established in universities, but are different from **the ordinary definition of 'chair-professor.'** A UNESCO Chair is endowed not to an individual, but to an institute (usually a university) after receiving approval from UNESCO.

UNESCO Chairs and UNITWINs can be established in any academic area as long as it is related to UNESCO. In most cases, they are interdisciplinary in nature. Universities or institutes approved by UNESCO as UNESCO Chairs or part of UNITWIN carry out activities on education, research, scholar/student exchanges, workshops, seminars, professor programme development, publishing, etc. Along the way, they will serve as think tanks or bridges among academia, civil society, local communities and policy makers. UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO regional offices, and national commissions for UNESCO provide support to and monitor such activities.

There are 807 UNESCO Chairs in 114 countries and 44 UNITWINs in 23 countries around the world. As of 2020, Korea has 5 UNESCO Chairs and 4 UNITWINs.

2.2.5. NETWORK OF UNESCO CATEGORY 2 INSTITUTES AND CENTERS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO

In the late 1990s, UNESCO started establishing Category 2 Institutes and

Centers as a solution to its chronic financial issues. Category 2 Institutes and Centers are a way to allow member states to have charge of UNESCO work in exchange for taking on the financial and human resources burden of the work. UNESCO Category 2 Institutes/Centers are established after receiving approval from the UNESCO Executive Board and ratification of the UNESCO General Conference, following which an MOU is signed between UNESCO (Director-**General**) and a representative of the relevant country's government, with the condition that the requesting country will bear the burden of the **institute/center's operating costs.**

Category 2 Institutes/Centers are organizations for international cooperation that perform UNESCO activities and conduct research in their areas of expertise in relation to UNESCO. They are not organizations directly belonging to UNESCO. Every 6 years, UNESCO carries out an evaluation of the operations of each Category 2 Institute/Center, based on which UNESCO will either renew the MOU **relating to the institute/center's establishment and operation, or in the case of poor performance, discontinue the MOU.** As of May 2018, there are 115 Category 2 Institutes/Centers around the world. Korea has 5 Category 2 Centers, and in 2019, the establishment of 2 additional Centers was approved, as below.

- Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU, Seoul)
- International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (ICHCAP, Jeonju)
- International Centre of Martial Arts for Youth Development and Engagement (ICM, Chungju)
- International Centre for Water Security and Sustainable Management (i-WSSM, Daejeon)
- International Centre for Documentary Heritage (ICDH, Cheongju)
- Global Research and Training Centre for Internationally Designated Areas (GCIDA, Jeju City) – to be established
- International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (Sejong) – to be established

2.3. MAJOR CHALLENGES IN PURSUIT OF PROJECTS

2.3.1. IDENTITY AND ROLES OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION

In the early days of UNESCO's existence, the mission of a member state's national commission was to act as a bridge between UNESCO and the member state's government, civil society, and academic and cultural circles. However, due to UNESCO's chronic financial problems, it became increasingly difficult for UNESCO to independently pursue its projects. In the meantime, the financial situation of some national commissions improved, which led to a situation where more and more national commissions took over projects from UNESCO or independently planned and pursued their own projects.

As the role and function of national commissions expanded, it has raised the question of what the identity of a national commission is. It also has raised the issue of work and project overlaps with UNESCO Headquarters, Regional Offices, Category 1 Centers, and Category 2 Centers. Moreover, the exact split of roles and responsibilities among relevant government ministries, the permanent delegations to UNESCO, and national commissions is not clear either. This vague identity of the national commission can work to its advantage, as it is easier for the commission to expand its areas and scope, but it can also work against the commission, as it may cause tension or conflict with relevant or similar organizations.

2.3.2. PROJECT AND BUDGET SIZE

KNCU has sufficient budget to perform its liaison and networking activities, but not enough for it to execute a full-fledged project on its own. Unless a new source of income is created, it needs to prioritize and focus on what is important. Another possible solution is to pursue a partnership with other organizations and expand its impact.

3. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF THE KOREAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

3.1. CLARIFYING FUTURE CHALLENGES IN EAST ASIA (REGIONAL AGENDA-SETTING)

3.1.1. COMMON IDENTITY AND SENSE OF SOLIDARITY IN EAST ASIA

In considering this issue, first, we need to define what 'East Asia' is and review what kinds of identity and sense of solidarity come to mind when people hear the term 'East Asia'. In a narrow sense, East Asia may be limited to the east side of the Asian continent, such as Japan, China, Mongolia, North Korea and South Korea. However, in the broader sense, East Asia can cover Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. East Asia can be defined as differentiated from West Asia and South Asia, which includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

There is no strong sense of regional identity in East Asia overall. Southeast Asia and ASEAN generally show stronger sense of identity, compared to which the common identity and sense of solidarity of East Asia is almost non-existent. As such, it is going to be very difficult to forge a common identity and solidarity in East Asia in the near future. This serves as a significant challenge, and overcoming it will determine the success and sustainability of any projects for East Asia.

3.1.2. COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A wave of international exchanges and cooperation has been on the rise globally since the late 1990s, but with borders closed and flights cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is now returning to the past, where each nation had to come up with its own survival strategy. Some political leaders, heads of international organizations and scholars still stress the importance of international cooperation, but these voices have lost power

quickly in the face of the spread of the virus. Racial discrimination, hatred, and exclusion are gaining power. As the Joint Research Project is aimed at promoting regional cooperation and pursuing joint efforts, the current pandemic poses another great challenge.

3.1.3. WEAKENED INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The tradition of multilateral cooperation, exemplified by the European Union in Europe, is relatively weak in East Asia. Although East Asia has some regional communities such as ASEAN, actual power is still executed at an individual national level, and bilateral cooperation is preferred in general. Separately, existing international organizations such as the United Nations and World Health Organization are being criticized as having responded incompetently to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, without a powerful central force, any joint cooperation project among national commissions for UNESCO could quickly lose its momentum.

3.2. PROPOSALS FOR JOINT COOPERATION PROJECTS

3.2.1. SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

Short-term project refers to any project that can begin implementation in the short term, from next year. A short-term project can avoid losing the momentum created by the initiation of this project and keep the momentum going.

(1) UNESCO Schools Joint Online Project for Mutual (International) Understanding

Background

The non-face-to-face online education that has emerged amidst the COVID-19 pandemic has made devices such as desktop, laptop, and tablet PCs an essential item in education, and wired/wireless internet connections have become an

integral part of education. This has resulted in additional requirements for educational facilities and equipment, because online teaching facilities are now a **prerequisite for UNESCO's goal of Education for All (EFA)**. Given predictions from medical professionals that similar pandemics are highly likely to re-occur, and arguments from educational experts that the education of the future will be education that leverages both online and offline learning, it is time to take online education seriously.

Ever since its establishment, UNESCO has put a great deal of effort into achieving EFA. In the face of the new challenge posed by COVID-19, UNESCO now needs to propose and pursue a new target: Online Education for All (Online EFA). New investment into online education will pose a new burden on developing and least-developed countries. Therefore, Online Education for All, just like the original Education for All initiative, needs to take a medium-to-long-term view, up to decades long. This report proposes that we should carry out a short-term pilot test-running online lectures by utilizing existing UNESCO Schools in preparation for such a long-term project.

Details of proposed project

- Target schools: Any UNESCO Schools in the 10 countries participating in the Joint Research Project (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam) that are willing to participate.

Table 2 describes the number of official UNESCO Schools in the 10 countries participating in this project. The number of schools that are actually participating in UNESCO School activities in each country could be different in reality.

<Table 2> Official UNESCO Schools in Countries Participating in this Project

	Pre- primary	Primary	Primary+ Secondary	Secondary	Teacher Training Institution	Vocational and Technical Institution	Special
Cambodia				10			
Indonesia	1	17	21	105		12	
Lao PDR		8	23		2		
Mongolia			4	4			
Myanmar					4		
Republic of Korea		164	119	311	4		10
Thailand		11	16	84	3	14	
The Philippines		73	68	8	16	3	
Timor- Leste		2	9				
Vietnam	4	9	9		1		

- Online class subjects: If the online classes in the project deal specifically only with topics relating to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, this should reduce overlaps with the existing curriculum and would be a good fit with the purpose of UNESCO schools.

To be specific, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) as covered in SDG 4.7, World Heritage education, and education on cultural diversity could be good options. Education for the prevention of cyber-bullying and other education on the SDGs could also be added. This project could also undertake to film 3D footage of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in the 10 participating countries and circulate the videos as education materials for use in online World Heritage education.

- Institutes and universities to cooperate on online education – utilize UNESCO Chairs / UNITWIN

It should not be difficult to develop educational materials per grade on education for sustainable development (ESD), global citizenship education (GCED), world

heritage education, education for cultural diversity, cyber-bullying prevention education, etc. as this project can utilize existing educational materials as much as possible. For instance, UNESCO APCEIU⁶⁵ has already developed and accumulated educational materials for global citizenship education; it has a clearing house⁶⁶ that has collected information on global citizenship education from around the world, and has also developed online lectures in English⁶⁷. Furthermore, a global network for citizenship education has already been formed **in Asia Pacific, and the Philippines' National Teachers' College** and Thai Chulalongkorn University are part of the network. As for education for sustainable development (ESD), institutes taking part in UNESCO GAP (Global Action Programme)⁶⁸ can provide support, and activities and educational materials accumulated by **United Nations University's RCE (Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD) network**⁶⁹ can also be utilized. If supplementary materials are required, UNITWIN and UNESCO Chairs can be utilized to develop them, while the UNITWIN Network for Schools of Distance Education could offer tremendous help in a variety of ways. The project would therefore be a highly effective use of existing UNESCO networks and capabilities.

- Methods for implementing the project on online education

(Option 1) Teacher training institutes

Among the 10 countries participating in this project, 6 countries have teacher training institutes officially recognized as taking part in UNESCO School activities. It may be more likely that classes could be taught in English at these teacher training institutes, making it easier to provide materials and consistency across classes. Therefore, it would be desirable to focus first on teacher training institutes for online SDG4.7 – ESD and GCED education. Prospective teachers studying at these institutes will play a leading role in

⁶⁵ <http://www.unescoapceiu.org/kor/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/>

⁶⁷ <http://www.gcedonlinecampus.org/>

⁶⁸ <https://en.unesco.org/gap/partner-network>

⁶⁹ <https://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/>

online education in the future, making it a top priority to implement international online education first in teacher training institutes. However, it would be realistic first to review in advance whether they currently have sufficient facilities for online classes, and start with the schools that do, rolling the programme out to other schools steadily, when facilities can be put in place.

To be specific, online classes on global citizenship education or education for sustainable development could be first conducted at the teacher training institutes that are part of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network and have the facilities ready for online classes, and later rolled out to other schools.

- Target schools: any teacher training institutes in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam that wish to participate, and have online education facilities in place
- Subjects:
 - Education for Sustainable Development
 - Global citizenship education
 - World heritage education
 - Education for cultural diversity
 - Cyber-bullying prevention education
 - Education on the SDGs
- Modalities for classes (options)
 - Special lectures
 - Each country to hold classes independently, and carry out joint classes between two or more countries for a certain period of time where possible (as each country has different curriculum schedules)
 - Joint classes for one semester – credit recognition
- Language: English

(Option 2) Online education for primary and secondary schools

As online education for primary and secondary schools will directly benefit students, it is also possible to carry out online education for a few schools whose facilities are ready. The easiest way to accomplish this would be to utilize an existing online educational group. IVECA (International Virtual

Exchange of Classroom Activities)⁷⁰ is an online platform that connects classrooms and classroom across borders. If IVECA, etc. is utilized, online education could be started relatively easily.

Another option would be to establish and develop direct online channels between UNESCO schools. This would reduce the costs and facilitate the preparation of educational materials that are more faithful to the UNESCO philosophy. To some extent, international exchange and cooperation are already premised among UNESCO schools as ASPnet is an international network in nature. It should therefore be relatively easy to design and promote international education programmes since a UNESCO school needs to have at least one international education programme to show its identity as a UNESCO school.

- Target schools: any primary and secondary schools wishing to participate, from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam and with online education facilities in place
- Subjects:
 - Education for Sustainable Development
 - Global citizenship education
 - World heritage education
 - Education for cultural diversity
 - Cyber-bullying prevention education
 - Education on the SDGs
- Modalities for classes (options)
 - Special lecture type
 - Each country to open classes independently, and carry out joint classes between two or more countries for a certain period of time where possible (as each country has different curriculum schedules)
 - Joint classes for one semester – credit recognition
- Language: English

⁷⁰ <http://www.website.iveca.org/>

(2) Online Education for All (Online EFA)

Background

According to a New York Times article on August 26, 2020, 1.5 billion students have not been able to go to school for the past 6 months as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and 500 million students were unable to even receive remote education during that time. According to UNICEF, 40% of students in the Middle East and North Africa, 38% of students in South Asia, and 34% of students in East Europe and Central Asia are unable to access the benefit of remote education.

On the other hand, children from families with high educational and income levels are in a much better position to have learning opportunities at home. Developed countries have been putting in place virtual online classes, replacing face-to-face classes with remote classes. If this continues, a new type of inequality will emerge around the world resulting from gaps in the provision of and access to non-face-to-face education opportunities. To address this new crisis of global inequality resulting from non-face-to-face education, this report proposes that UNESCO should pursue a new Online Education for All (Online EFA) initiative.

Details of proposed project

The provision of online education is being rapidly stepped-up as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but education experts also predict that it will play an increasing role in future education, regardless of the pandemic. In recent years, Minerva Schools have gained much popularity, and there are increasing numbers of universities around the world offering distance education. In Korea, these include the Korea Communications University, Cyber University, and Digital University. However, distance education is impossible without good digital infrastructure. Digital infrastructure for online education requires significant investment. To help ensure that the necessary digital infrastructure can be established for online education, UNESCO must declare a new global

initiative, like the World Declaration on Education for All adopted at the 1990 Jomtien Conference, and seek ODA from developed countries and funds from international development banks.

As the first step towards UNESCO Online Education for All, it is proposed to carry out a pilot project in 10 East Asian countries.

[Online EFA project for 10 East Asian countries]

- Participating countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam
- How each country can participate: countries with online education infrastructure in place can help countries without it to build the necessary digital infrastructure
- Areas of cooperation:
 - Gathering information to analyze an accurate status of the current online education infrastructure (electricity supply, educational equipment, etc.)
 - Providing online education equipment (radios, TVs, tablet PCs, computers, cameras for streaming, cameras for individuals, headsets, etc.)
 - Online education content transmission/reception infrastructure (Wi-Fi, internet networks, etc.)
 - Training teachers on online education
- Methods of cooperation
 - Consult with UNESCO Field Office
 - Secure resources available in the region and private sector
 - Sign MOU with participating countries
 - Establish joint special fund

(3) Establishment of a Cooperation Center for Capacity Building of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia Pacific – Employee training, consulting, research, equipment support

Background

199 national commissions for UNESCO have been established around the world. More national commissions are established and in operation than the number of

UNESCO member states. The national commission system is unique to UNESCO within the UN system. In the **beginning, national commissions' primary task** was to serve as an advisor and liaison between UNESCO and its member states, but its role gradually expanded, adding information and execution functions by the 14th UNESCO General Conference in 1966. In 1978, the Charter of the National Commissions for UNESCO⁷¹ was adopted to solidify the legal basis of national commissions. This also established the institutionalization necessary for national commissions to participate in the preparation and evaluation of UNESCO projects.

According to the Architecture of National Commissions for UNESCO⁷² Published by UNESCO in 2009, the number of employees in national commissions varies, ranging from zero full-time staff to over 60 employees, though the average number of employees, including professionals and support personnel, is 9. More specifically, 35% of national commissions have a small-scale staff with 1-5 members, 44% have a medium-sized staff of 6-14 people, and 19% have a large staff with 15 or more people. In terms of information provision, 41% of the national commissions publish information and promotional materials, 67% publish annual reports, and 53% have their own website. Budget sizes for national commissions vary even more, ranging from the smallest budget of USD 7,000 per year to the highest budget of USD 7 million per year.

International organizations including the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), and UNESCO have been criticized as offering a weak and limited response to the current global COVID-19 pandemic. Such criticism has led to questions regarding the reason for the existence of international organizations. UNESCO, which is experiencing an ongoing financial crisis, must find a new path forward. Since UNESCO has a valuable asset in its network of national commissions that other international organizations do not have, it

⁷¹ [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48883&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

[URL_ID=48883&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48883&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

⁷² Architecture of National Commissions for UNESCO: Fundamentals concerning their status, composition and resources (UNESCO Sector for External Relations and Cooperation Division of Relations with Member States and National Commissions, 2009)

should make good use of this network to overcome the current crisis and move forward.

For national commissions for UNESCO to reach their full potential, there are some prerequisites. First is the need to secure human resources with appropriate expertise. Second is the need to secure sufficient financial resources. Until now, UNESCO has let national commissions resolve these issues on their own. This report proposes the establishment of a Cooperation Center for Capacity Building of National Commissions in order to solve such issues more systematically going forward.

Proposed major functions of the Cooperation Center for Capacity Building of National Commissions:

① Employee training

To enhance the expertise of the employees of national commissions, provide courses on teaching expertise relating to UNESCO and national commissions as well as on practical administrative knowledge

② Consulting

Perform a professional consulting role for the operation and development of national commissions

③ Research

Conduct research on the operation and development of national commissions

④ Subsidize equipment costs

Provide financial support and equipment for the establishment, operation and development of national commissions

3.2.2. MEDIUM-TO-LONG-TERM PROJECTS

These would be projects pursued after carrying out significant advance planning and with a medium-to-long-term plan of at least 5 to 10 years.

(1) Cooperation Center for Capacity Building of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia Pacific (as UNESCO Category 2 Center)

If the Cooperation Center for Capacity Building of National Commissions (the launch of which is proposed under the short-term projects section above) operates smoothly, this report proposes to apply for its designation as a UNESCO Category 2 Center, 2 to 5 years after its launch. If the cooperation center is successfully approved as an official partner organization of UNESCO, it will further stabilize and systemize operations, giving them a more institutionalized basis than operations based simply on an agreement among national commissions, and will also help secure the sustainability of its projects.

(2) Co-sponsor of a UNESCO Convention/Recommendation

Establishing international norms is an important part of UNESCO's role. Countries participating in Asia Pacific network could co-sponsor an international convention, recommendation, or declaration.

Recently, teacher and student exchanges in the Asia Pacific region are becoming more active. In order to provide side support to such exchanges, this report suggests that it would be worthwhile to review the potential co-sponsoring of a Recommendation on Asia Pacific teacher-student mobility.

(3) Proposing new projects

Another possibility would be for national commissions participating in this project to jointly propose new UNESCO project ideas as follows:

Designation of peace heritage areas

One of UNESCO's most representative programmes is the World Heritage Programme, through which UNESCO designates and protects cultural and natural heritage all over the world. This report proposes a project for the designation of peace heritage areas as another heritage project for UNESCO to serve its mission of contributing to world peace. Many regions all over the world are currently falling victim to conflicts and disputes. If any of these conflicts can be peacefully resolved, UNESCO could declare and designate the area as an

area of UNESCO Peace Heritage to promote and sustain the hard-earned peace. For example, in 2016, the Colombian government and the rebel forces signed a peace treaty ending their long civil war. UNESCO could designate a place iconic to Colombia as peace heritage and provide special aid or support for reconstruction of education and culture.

With this project, UNESCO could further its core mission as an international organization for world peace, by encouraging countries that have finally achieved peace to maintain it, and encouraging other countries still in conflict to reach peace.

Designation of Global Citizenship Cities

Global citizenship is currently in retreat, with discrimination and hatred based on race and nationality increasing since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This project would propose to establish a new UNESCO programme under which cities that implement best practices in promoting global citizenship and preventing hatred and discrimination based on race, nationality, and religion, etc., would be designated as 'UNESCO Global Citizenship Cities.' The programme would also operate an intercity network for such cities. This could have a significant impact on spreading the spirit of global citizenship.

Research and proposal of ideas for the development/reform of UNESCO

UNESCO has tried to reform itself many times before, but without much lasting impact. The Organization needs to try something new for the 21st century. It is time for national commissions for UNESCO, whose networks encompass intellectuals, professionals, expert groups, and civil society, to take the lead in reviewing and proposing ideas on how to develop UNESCO. This report proposes that the 10 countries participating in this project should establish a UNESCO Reform Task Force to undertake medium-to-long-term research on this issue and co-sponsor a joint resolution to the UNESCO Executive Board.

Joint research on a new development agenda for the post-SDGs era

① Background

At the 1990 World Conference on Education held in Jomtien, Thailand, UNESCO set Education for All (EFA) as a common goal for all member states to achieve. At the 2000 World Conference on Education held in Dakar, Senegal, the Framework for Action was adopted with 6 education goals. UNESCO publishes the EFA Global Monitoring Report every year, to keep track of progress towards these education goals. In September 2000, at its Millennium Summit, the United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration, and established 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that all UN member states should achieve by 2015. Following up on these global agendas, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by UN member states in 2015. The SDGs' target year is 2030.

After 2030, a new global agenda is expected to be adopted, so it would be meaningful to start preparing for this post-SDGs agenda. In this context, this report proposes a joint research project on a new development agenda for the post-SDGs era as a medium-to-long-term joint cooperation project for the ten national commissions participating in the 2020 Joint Research Project.

② Project plan

If the 10 countries participating in this project can establish a working group for post-SDGs agenda preparation, to study and develop ideas for the post-SDGs development agenda, and organize regular forums to collect opinions and promote activities, it will be possible for national commissions to exercise a bigger influence on post-SDGs global agenda-setting.

Joint history and geography education for international mutual understanding

① Background

At the 18th UNESCO General Conference in 1974 the Recommendation

concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (hereinafter the “1974 Recommendation”) was adopted. Article 45 of the 1974 Recommendation recommends that member states should take measures to ensure that history and geography textbooks “are accurate, balanced, up to date and unprejudiced and will enhance mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples.”

Therefore, it is desirable for UNESCO schools to review and discuss whether their history and geography textbooks are “accurate, balanced, and unprejudiced” especially towards other countries.

② Details of proposed project

The first step in the project would be to review whether history and geography textbooks of the UNESCO schools in each of the countries participating in this project have accurate and balanced descriptions about other countries, and openly discuss the review outcomes with the UNESCO schools of the other countries.

Discussion of history education between government authorities is difficult to achieve, and dialogue between historians has also been difficult. Unlike previous approaches, therefore, it is proposed to prepare a class in which **participating countries’ UNESCO** school teachers and students would discuss how other countries are described in their history and geography textbooks, and reach an agreement together on necessary revisions. If they fail to reach a consensus in the class, such disagreement can be the outcome of the class.

The next step would be to systematically collect and categorize these outcomes, accumulate more educational materials, and lay the foundation for a full-scale development of history and geography textbooks later. This project would be part of an ongoing step-by-step approach to the eventual publication of common history and geography textbooks for East Asia in the medium to long term.

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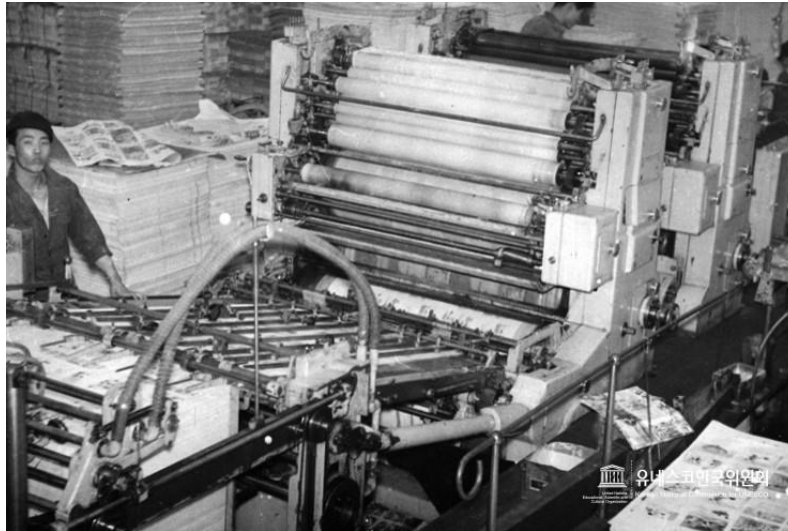
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1. Textbook printing factory established with the support of UNESCO



2. Textbook printed at the printing factory established by UNESCO



3. Opening Ceremony of the Korean UNESCO Building



4. Opening Ceremony of the Korean UNESCO Building



5. UNESCO Building (1960s)



6. UNESCO Building (2020)

Thai National Commission for UNESCO

Ms. Duriya AMATAVIVAT



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



THAI National Commission for UNESCO

สำนักเลขาธิการคณะกรรมการแห่งชาติว่าด้วยการศึกษา
วิทยาศาสตร์ และวัฒนธรรม แห่งสหประชาชาติ (ยูเนสโก)

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FOREWORD

The COVID-19 has brought extreme and unforeseen obstacles to global development. The stagnation of development has affected every sector over the whole world, making this a time when we have to stand and be united to cope with the situation and ensure that work towards the global development goals continues.

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO (TNCU) appreciates the proposal made by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) to establish an intellectual platform for Member States in Asia to reflect on ourselves and share development progress through documentary research and input from expert **interviews of respective National Commissions of UNESCO. TNCU's report on the survey carried out for the first phase of this project describes TNCU's background and core programmes, and challenges in working towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Thailand. The proposed project has highlighted the importance of education as fundamental to national development. Teachers are still the most critical element in providing quality education, while to keep pace with emerging challenges, digital skills and future literacy have a great contribution to make to the reform of teaching-learning pedagogies and teacher development programmes.**

We look forward to working closely with participating National Commissions for UNESCO in the second phase of the project to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Duriya AMATAVIVAT
Secretary-General
Thai National Commission for UNESCO

PROFILE OF THE THAI NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Organizational Structure

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO was set up in 1949 by a cabinet resolution, as a body attached to the Ministry of Education of Thailand. The current structure of the Commission is shown in the chart below.

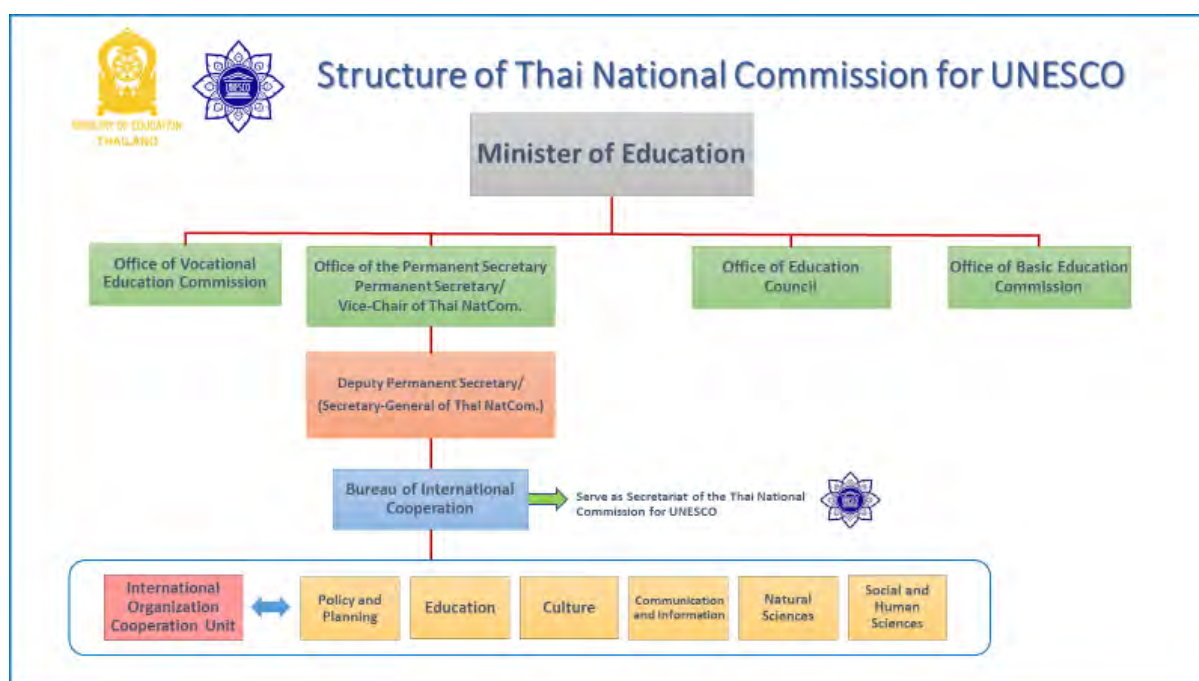


Figure 3: Structure of Thai National Commission for UNESCO

Executive Bodies of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO

- **Chairperson:** Minister of Education
- **Vice Chairperson:** Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
- **Secretary-General:** Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
- **Deputy Secretary – General:** Director of Bureau of International Cooperation, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
- **Assistant Secretary – General:** Director of Multilateral Unit, Bureau of International Cooperation, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

Number of Staff Members

As the Secretariat of the Commission is attached to the Bureau of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry has allocated a unit of eight full-time staff members to work on UNESCO programmes. Each of the staff members is assigned to be responsible for specific programmes such as education, culture, science, social and human sciences, communication and information, and policy and planning related to UNESCO activities. In addition, the administration of UNESCO work is also supported by other staff members of the Bureau.

Relevant Ministries

The Secretariat of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO is attached to the Ministry of Education of Thailand. However, the Commission has specialized committees, appointed by the Cabinet, to support UNESCO programmes in line **with UNESCO's fields of competence**. Ad-hoc teams/taskforces/sub-committees are occasionally set up to assist in providing recommendations to the National Commission whenever it deems necessary. Therefore, the Commission itself involves line ministries, academia, civil society organizations, NGOs, and private sector organizations to support its work. The seven specialized committees and their Chairs are as follows:

Specialized Committee on Education

- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

Specialized Committee on Natural Science

- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology, Research, and Innovation

Specialized Committee on Culture

- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Culture

Specialized Committee on Social and Human Sciences

- Secretary-General of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO

Specialized Committee on Communications and Information

- Director-General, Department of Public Relations

Committee on the Memory of the World Programme

- Director-General, Department of Fine Arts

Committee on the Man and Biosphere Programme

- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Figure 4: List of Specialized Committees and Chairs

These specialized committees are also tasked to set up any sub-committees and/or task forces where necessary. This structure enables the Thai National Commission of UNESCO to mobilize valuable inputs from relevant stakeholders.

Legal Status and Function

The Commission was legally established by a cabinet resolution and consists of the following bodies:

- **The General Assembly:** This body consists of 22 Commission members, who are appointed by the Cabinet. They are representatives from relevant departments/ministries, institutions, and NGOs, as well as senior experts in UNESCO's fields of competence.
- **Specialized Committees:** As noted above, there are seven specialized committees in charge of UNESCO programmes, namely, Education; Culture; Natural Sciences; Social and Human Sciences; Communication

and Information; Memory of the World (MOW); and Man and the Biosphere (MAB). The Specialized Committees meet three to four times a year. If necessary, ad-hoc task forces/sub-committees can be set up and tasked with special assignments to provide inputs or recommendations to the Committees whenever necessary.

Budget Structure

As the Commission is attached to the Ministry of Education, the budget of the Commission comes from the government through the Ministry of Education. Annually, the Commission will be allocated the budget for membership contributions to UNESCO and other expenses. The amount of budget allocation in each year varies according to the requests based on UNESCO's activities.

1. PAST: HISTORY OF THE THAI NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MEMBER STATE: ACCESSION TO UNESCO

Thailand joined the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 1 January 1949 amidst the coming of the Cold War. At that moment, Thailand hoped to ally itself with regional partners in order to restore peace and security in the country as well as the region.

In 1954, Thailand became a charter member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). [Britannica, 2008] Later, in 1965, Thailand became one of the founders of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) aiming to develop strong cooperation on education, culture, and science at the regional level, as UNESCO does at the global level. SEAMEO has set up various centres of excellence in the fields of education, culture, and science so as to enable the region to establish strong networks in UNESCO fields of competence. Thailand also offered to host the Secretariat of this organization

in Bangkok. Currently, the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and SEAMEO Secretariat share the same building hosted by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, Thailand currently hosts five centres of excellence, namely the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Tropical Medicine (TROPMED), SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA), SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED), SEAMEO Regional Centre for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education (STEM-ED), and SEAMEO Regional Centre for Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for Sustainability (SEPS). When the South East Asia region made another tremendous effort to develop and strengthen regional peace, stability, and prosperity, by establishing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand became one of the founding members, together with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore.

Thailand was one of the world's fastest growing economies from the 1960s to the late 90s. By the 1990s, Thailand was considered to be part of a second wave of newly industrializing countries, or NICs, that included such countries in the region as Malaysia and Indonesia and that were following fast on the heels of such first-wave NICs as South Korea and Singapore. This growth substantially improved the standard of living in Thailand, especially among urban dwellers.

THE BIRTH OF THAI NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO was established in October 1949 after the country was ratified as a UNESCO member.

1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s

Since Thailand became a member of UNESCO in 1949 the country has participated continuously



Figure 5: HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn presided over the opening ceremony of the World Conference of Education

in many UNESCO programmes and activities to ensure the peace, prosperity and sustainability of humankind. Its cooperation with UNESCO became more active and proactive when Thailand proposed to host the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok in 1961. Since then, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO has played an important role in working with UNESCO Bangkok to facilitate the work of UNESCO in the region. Thailand has become the venue of many important meetings and conferences.

Education has long been recognized as one of the most important tools to promote the social and economic development of a nation. During the 1980s, UNESCO highlighted the need for educational opportunities and encouraged all member states to promote access to education for all. Therefore, an initiative on Education for All (EFA) was widely accepted at the global level. In 1990, Thailand was the venue of the **World Conference on Education for All**, attended by high level delegates from 155 countries and a number of major donors. At that World Conference, the World Declaration on Education, referred to as the Jomtien Declaration, was announced. Since then, several national initiatives leading to education reform have been introduced in line with the commitments many countries adopted during that World Conference. As for Thailand, the National Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Education started to expand more educational opportunities for students and youth by expanding a number of primary schools in rural areas



Figure 6: HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn presided over the opening ceremony of the 10th Meeting of the High Level Working Group on Education For All (EFA)

so that they could provide lower secondary education and later revising the Compulsory Education Act to expand compulsory education from 6 years to 9 years.

Thailand has also collaborated with UNESCO and the international community in supporting a global effort to ensure that all people can access quality education. During the period 2001-2012, Thailand was the venue of the Annual EFA Coordinator Meetings, and the Thai National Commission for UNESCO played an important role in supporting the meeting as co-host. Thailand offered to collaborate with UNESCO to host the **10th Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All**, in 2011, to celebrate 20 years since the adoption of Jomtien Declaration. During the meeting, the Jomtien Statement was developed, and member countries were urged to revive their political commitments to Education for All (EFA) and scale up efforts to tackle key education issues up until 2015.

Consequently, many other meetings and conferences were organized in Thailand in 2010s, and the Thai National Commission for UNESCO was invited to co-host those activities. Thailand was the venue of the 16th and 17th UNESCO-APEID International Conference, the Expert Meeting on Device and Content Development: Mobile Literacy for Out-of-School Children, and the Regional Expert Meeting on Inclusive Education through Quality Teacher Education in Asia-Pacific, etc.

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO also co-hosted other high-level meetings with UNESCO, such as the **First Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Education** and **the Second Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Education**, as well as Ministerial Conferences on ICT in Education. In addition, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO also continuously cooperated with UNESCO Bangkok on other expert meetings and technical working group meetings held in Thailand. Thailand also sent participants to join every important UNESCO meeting both in Thailand and out of the country.

As part of the **EFA review in 2015**, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO played a leading role at the country level in assessing the national progress towards achieving the six goals of Education for All. The report produced reflects the ongoing and active role of the Thai Ministry of Education in raising the level of learner achievement to reach international standards, particularly in the sciences, mathematics, technology, foreign languages and critical analysis. Teacher and teaching reforms have been undertaken to ensure that education personnel and curricula meet and match more closely the **country's needs**. At the same time, the country has increased its efforts to **instill the '12 core values of the Thai people' in Thai learners** – values that help the Thai people to live together with others in peace and harmony.



Figure 7: School Rice Project

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO has also initiated many national activities related to the promotion of UNESCO programmes and activities to other national partners. In 2015, the Commission organized a **National Seminar for ASPnet schools based on the Asian Regional Initiative for Climate Change Education (RICE) Project**. This regional initiative aims to implement collaborative learning on education for sustainable development (ESD) under the **common theme of 'rice'**.

One hundred and twenty-seven ASPnet schools participated in the seminar and learnt about the project. The National Commission also encouraged all schools nationwide to participate in the RICE Project by disseminating relevant information via the website of the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Commission submitted a request to the Office of the Basic Education Commission and the Office of the Private Education Commission to nominate representatives for a national team to encourage participation among schools. Throughout the year, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO partnered with schools to implement the RICE Project, providing learning materials on ESD and resource

persons from either the Ministry of Education or the UNESCO Office in Bangkok to assist with activities.



*Figure 9: ASPnet Seminar
"pilot project SDGs for youth"*

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO continued its active role in coordinating with UNESCO to implement programmes in the fields of UNESCO areas, to meet both national and international development targets. In line with the 2030 Education agenda, on 12 June 2017 the Thai National Commission for UNESCO and the International Institute for Trade and Development (ITD) organized a national **seminar to promote SDG4 – Education 2030**, under the project "Strengthening Thailand's Potential for Achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Agenda 2030". The forum was attended by more than 100 participants and concluded with an agreement between all stakeholders on the need to create a roadmap for implementing SDG4 targets 4.1 and 4.2 as well as to develop systematic national indicators for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. The Thai National Commission for UNESCO, jointly with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and UNESCO Bangkok Office, organized a Training Workshop for Officials of Asian National Commissions for UNESCO on 20-23 June 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop



Figure 8: 2019 Exchange programme

contributed to the effective functioning of National Commissions for UNESCO by helping them to better understand current issues within UNESCO, and by providing them with first-hand opportunities for project planning. It was attended by 43 participants from 25 countries.

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the National Commissions of the People’s Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, has implemented an **Exchange Programme for Members of UNESCO National Commissions** since 1970.



Figure 10: 2019 Exchange programme

Every year, participating National Commissions are invited to send a staff member to visit the National Commissions of the other participating countries to strengthen cooperation and understanding between the National Commissions for UNESCO of the participating countries. Participants are also provided with opportunities to visit relevant agencies to learn about and exchange views on UNESCO programmes and activities of the host country. The host country also arranges for the participants to visit other important places such as World Heritage Sites. The exchange programme in 2019 was held during 27 May - 2 June 2019 in Thailand. There were participants from the National Commissions of the People’s Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Kenya and Germany. This year, Thailand was not able to invite staff members from other National Commissions due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

With the cooperation of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok, the National Commission launched a project entitled **‘Strengthening the Education System of Thailand for Effective Human Resource Development’**. The Commission also held workshops to review the ‘Education Sector Planning Project: ESP Modules’ and on ‘Training for ESP Modules’. [UNESCO, 2015]

Every year, the Ministry of Education holds an event to celebrate **World Teachers’ Day**. The event has provided an excellent forum for delegates from Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries to meet and exchange views, in

particular regarding possible ways to develop the full potential of teachers and assist them in improving teaching methods. [UNESCO, 2014]



Figure 11: Workshop on Training ESP Modules

Thailand has also provided support in organizing several important global and regional fora such as the **1st Bangkok Workshop on Ethics Partnerships for Asia and the Pacific** and the **4th Session of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST)** in 2005, the Forum on Global Citizenship Education, and the Global Media and Gender Meeting in 2014, and Cracking the Code: Girls' Education in STEM in 2017.



Figure 12: HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn presided over the opening ceremony of the Conference on the Ethics of Science & Technology and Sustainable Development on Friday, 5 July 2019

In the field of ethics in science, Thailand, in cooperation with UNESCO, hosted the 26th Session of the UNESCO International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and the 11th Session of the UNESCO World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) as well as the Conference on the Ethics of Science & Technology and Sustainable Development during 2 - 7 July 2019 in Bangkok. Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn graciously presided over the opening ceremony of the Conference on the Ethics of Science and Technology and Sustainable Development on 5 July 2019 to deliver an opening address. The meetings were held at the time when rapid technological change was causing public concerns on the ethical conduct of research and practices in the fields of science and technology, especially concerns on protecting human dignity and human rights and ensuring inclusiveness and sustainability in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The conference emphasized science and technology ethics with regard to modern technologies and associated concerns, including genome technologies, robotics/artificial intelligence/big data technologies, climate change technologies, and research integrity.



Figure 13: Activities at IBC and COMEST



Figure 14: Final Review Meeting of the Implementation of Happy Schools Project Phase II

In recent years, Thailand has been selected as part of the pilot phase of the Happy Schools Project. The Thai National Commission for UNESCO has embraced the concept of Happy Schools and conducted activities in five pilot schools in the four regions of Thailand (Ban Bangneaw Municipal School, Phuket; Benchama Maharat School,

Ubonratchathani; Jirasart Witthaya School, Ayutthaya; MuangKrabi School, Krabi; and Suksasongkhro Chiangmai School, Chiangmai) to ensure that learning takes place with joy and passion, to achieve the long-term goals of sustainable human capital development.

The fact that Thailand is a middle-income country and that UNESCO's Asia and the Pacific Regional Bureau for Education is based in Bangkok has allowed Thailand to work with UNESCO as a partner in facilitating regional dialogues in the fields of education and culture. This relationship has allowed UNESCO to use Bangkok as a regional hub for its activities in the Asia-Pacific region and has enabled Thailand to benefit greatly from the high level of knowledge and expertise shared in Bangkok by regional experts. Thailand has also been playing an increasing role as a development partner cooperating with neighboring countries. Therefore, cooperation between UNESCO Bangkok and the Royal Thai Government can be characterized as a mutually beneficial two-way partnership. **For over seven decades, Thailand has followed UNESCO's efforts to pursue its mission of building peace in the minds of men and women.** The current Minister of Education, as Chair of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO, has **reaffirmed Thailand's commitment to supporting peace building and sustainable development through education and culture.** [Thai National Commission for UNESCO, 2019]



Figure 15: Ways Forward for the Happy Schools Project

2. PRESENT: MAIM PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE THAI NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS OF THE THAI NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Thailand's current 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) has been announced as a framework for driving the country's goal for sustainable national development. The vision of the country is ***Thailand becomes a developed country with security, prosperity and sustainability in line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy***. Based on the national strategy, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO would like to highlight some of the key topics under UNESCO's framework on which we are able to cooperate with other National Commissions for UNESCO, as follows:

Education

1. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
2. Global Citizenship Education (GCED)
3. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
4. Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)
5. Digital Technologies in Education

Culture

1. Preservation of World Heritage Sites
2. Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
3. Interfaith Dialogues

Natural Sciences

1. Man and the Biosphere (MAB)
2. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)
3. UNESCO Global Geoparks Programme

Social and Human Sciences

1. Ethics in Scientific Knowledge and Technology
2. Peace and Human Rights Education
3. Management of Social Transformations (MOST)
4. Futures Literacy

Information and Communication

1. Memory of the World Programme (MOW)
2. Media Literacy
3. Free flow of Information



Figure 16: HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn graciously accepts her nomination as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador from UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura on 24 March 2005.

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO also highlights **education for disadvantaged children**. In this regard, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, **one of UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassadors**, has undertaken numerous projects to develop the well-being of disadvantaged children and youth in remote areas of Thailand. The projects have addressed multiple dimensions of development – food and nutrition, health and hygiene, education, training in vocational skills and cooperatives, as well as environmental and cultural conservation. The royally-initiated projects have yielded positive impacts in enhancing the potential of many children, reinforcing their self-sufficiency and improving their quality of life. In order to reach out to other children and youth in the Asia-Pacific region, a pilot project was launched in 2006 to adapt and apply Her Royal Highness's knowledge and experience to schools in

Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. [UNESCO, 2008]

We also welcome cooperation in strengthening UNESCO networks, for instance the Learning Cities Network, Creative Cities Network, Global Geoparks Network, UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), and Happy Schools Project. Thailand has participated in the ASPnet since 1958 and a number of educational institutions, ranging from primary and secondary



Figure 18: Workshop on Capacity Building and Network Development between Thai ASPnet Schools 2019



Figure 17: Workshop on Capacity Building and Network Development between Thai ASPnet Schools 2019

schools to vocational and technical colleges and teachers' colleges, have regularly and actively participated in ASPnet activities. The Thai National Commission for UNESCO has set up a sub-committee for the ASP, comprising core members of the ASPnet, under the Specialized Committee on Education. This is a modality of school network aiming for the promotion of International Understanding, Human Rights,

Tolerance and Peace in compliance with the UN's purposes and goals. The key to success of the ASPnet in Thailand is the opportunity given to teachers and students to participate in activities within the fields of UNESCO competence and other UN agencies that has helped strengthen their learning processes. The Thai National Commission for UNESCO is responsible for organizing an annual seminar to enable school members to share their best practices and propose recommendations to the National Commission. The topic for each annual seminar varies according to the situation and the interest of school members. In 2019, the Thai National Commission for UNESCO organized the Workshop on Capacity Building and Network Development between Thai ASPnet Schools in Bangkok. The Workshop aimed at raising the awareness of directors, teachers and ASP

coordinators about the SDGs, as well as the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, **for application in the schools' activities. The aim was to allow teachers to be able** to cultivate their students and young people to understand conceptual ideas that can be used in daily life to sustain their community and the world. The workshop offered a platform for all participants to brainstorm ways they could initiate/continue activities in schools related to the SDGs that covered the topics of Human Rights, the Environment and Peace Education.

Thailand currently has 128 schools participating in the ASPnet. (The list of ASPnet schools can be found in the Annex to this report.) Some of the members of the ASPnet were selected to join the pilot for the Happy School Project, and the Thai National Commission for UNESCO therefore encourages participating schools to expand the Happy School concept to their networks.

CHALLENGES TO CURRENT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Since the Thai economy has become even more interconnected to the global economy, the national economic structure has inevitably been affected by **external changes. The country's international competitiveness has demonstrated** only slow improvement due to a minimal utilization of scientific knowledge, technology, and innovation to expand value chains in agriculture, manufacturing and the services industries. This has been paralleled by low productivity in the agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors. Additionally, the country is still facing qualitative challenges in terms of human resource, education, public services, and healthcare provision. Inequality remains high in most aspects of Thai society, and deficiencies in public services result in an overflowing of waste in the cities, and an unsystematic water management network. The growing intensity of climate change has increased the level of risks and impacts, leading to stricter rules and regulations with regard to natural resource usage.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down the work of all sectors and minimized the **opportunity of all UNESCO's member states to participate** in development programmes and other initiatives. Even though online methods have **been implemented to address difficulties in UNESCO's work, some of the**

development programmes risk being slowed down, or worse, obsoleted. [DaSilva, 2020]

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously impacted our lives and brought extreme and unforeseen challenges for the global community. The education systems of the world have come under increased pressure to ensure quality and equity of student learning. Challenges have included interrupted learning, nutrition, parents unprepared for home schooling, unequal access to digital learning portals, gaps in childcare, increased pressure on schools and school systems that remained open, and rising dropout rates. Schools have had to make changes to provide safe spaces for learning, which will increase their financial burden post COVID-19.

Effective educational interventions in times of crisis can build resilience and social cohesion, and can also be fundamental to recovery and sustainable development. Disruption to education systems around the world, however, are among the most serious second-order effects of the pandemic and to overcome **the crisis as efficiently as possible, UNESCO's member states should reach** consensus on producing ways to overcome challenges brought by the pandemic and potential solutions.

CURRENT NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

Thailand is committed to UNESCO's mission to build peace in the minds of men and women and currently contributes to the board, committees and commissions of UNESCO as follows:

1. Membership on the Executive Board: Member (until 2023)
2. Membership of Intergovernmental Committees, Commissions, etc.:
 - Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee: IGBC (until 2023)
 - Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme: IFAP (until 2023)
 - Intergovernmental Council of the Management of Social Transformations: MOST (until 2023)
 - World Heritage Committee: WHC (until 2023)

- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO: IOC
- Creative Cities Network: 4 cities have been designated as members of the network, namely, **Phuket** (2015-Gastronomy); **Chiang Mai** (2017- Crafts and Folk Art); **Bangkok** (2019-Design) and **Sukhothai** (2019- Crafts and Folk Art)
- Learning Cities Network: 4 cities have been accepted into the network, namely, **Chiangrai** (2019) and **Chachoengsao, Chiang Mai** and **Phuket** (2020)
- Global Geoparks Network: Satun Geopark has been designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark and is a member of the network.

3. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF THE THAI NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

IDENTIFYING FUTURE COMMON CHALLENGES IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ACTIVITIES PROPOSED

The world has seen significant economic, political, social and cultural changes during the last two centuries. Most countries have experienced, or have been affected by, industrialization, urbanization, globalization and the expansion of mass consumerism. Modern science and the digital revolution have transformed infrastructure, transport and communication, and technological breakthroughs are ushering in the fourth industrial revolution.

Despite these advances, the world faces many challenges, including growing contradictions, widening inequalities and hazardous pandemics. Although there have been fewer wars between nation states in the recent past, the incidence of armed conflict within countries has increased, resulting in a significant rise in the number of refugees and internally displaced people. Others forms of violence, such as domestic violence, criminal assault, child abuse and bullying, including in cyberspace, are a growing problem in many societies. There is also evidence of worsening mental health and a diminution of 'inner peace', reflected in increasing global rates of anxiety, addiction, depression and suicide. Moreover, with a world

population of 7 billion people and limited natural resources, we, as individuals and societies, need to learn to live together sustainably. Population dynamics, in turn, affect education in many ways. The slowdown of economies across the world has thrown up a set of challenges for employment opportunities, especially in light of the agenda for sustainable development. Every sector of life is facing major setbacks and academia is no exception.

Within Thailand, many challenges can be observed in the national context too. The shifting structure of the population towards an aging society is producing both quantitative and qualitative problems for people all ages. Thai people are enjoying more social stability but there are also qualitative problems including issues relating to health, morality and ethics. Thai society is facing increased cultural degradation and becoming a multicultural society. In the domestic sphere, Thai families are decreasing in size and have different structures than they used to. Poverty is decreasing and communities are being empowered and strengthened, but significant inequality in income distribution continues.

The education system is now facing free, dynamic and borderless competition as a result of globalization. It is therefore necessary to remodel the education system to respond to a new global economic system driven by technology, innovation and creativity. The COVID-19 outbreak is accelerating such changes, as educators across the globe face uncertainties and challenges due to closure of schools and colleges and forced rapid transition to online teaching.

In response to the challenges facing Thai society, the 20-Year National Strategy has integrated the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy into every aspect of national development, including education reform. This philosophy is embedded in the fundamental principles of Thai culture. The Philosophy consists of three pillars: **Moderation**; sufficiency at a level of not doing something too little or too much at the expense of oneself or others, **Reasonableness**; assessing causes and effects of actions through using a logical approach, and **Resilience**: capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or losses, along with risk management and preparations for future impacts of change. The key elements of the Philosophy aim to instill decent characteristics to young people so that they will become

responsible citizens.

Hence, there is a need to improve teaching methods by designing new pedagogies that include the concept of the Philosophy, and the concepts of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies based on the three domains of learning - cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral. Individuals are encouraged to be responsible actors who are able to cope with challenges, respect cultural diversity, and contribute to creating a more sustainable world.

The Thai National Commission for UNESCO regards education as an effective tool to overcome the obstacles outlined above and drive economic and social development in order to transform the country into a fully developed country. We hope that each and everyone in society will be able to take action responsibly based on the understanding that what we do today can have implications on the lives of people and the planet in future. Therefore, our proposed project focuses on two skill-sets to enable integration of the concepts of the Philosophy, GCED and ESD into ***Redesigning teaching-learning pedagogies and teacher development.***

1) Digital Skills

The COVID-19 pandemic is granting us an opportunity to improve our education system. We can adjust ourselves in so many ways, one of which is to integrate ICT with teaching and learning processes. This will allow Thai learners to utilize digital technology to obtain relevant skills and competencies as required in this digital age, so preparing young citizens for future development. Obviously, learners will have to adjust and familiarize themselves with digital technologies and related devices so as to develop their knowledge. We can use the **opportunity of the pandemic to take stock of our learners' skills in learning and taking examinations online, etc.**, in line with their age groups. Such information will help us to support each student based on his/her learning performance. In order for students to excel in both their personal and professional lives, basic

digital skills and knowledge in technology are required. These skills should be introduced early, as they set a foundation for students to build upon, regardless of what career path they choose. Digital skills should not later become a barrier to learning, but rather facilitate learning. Moreover, digital skills are the foundation to an understanding of artificial intelligence and artificial reality, which have become vital to our ways of life.

2) Futures Literacy

Futures Literacy is a skill that allows people to better understand the role that the future plays in what they see and do. Humans are able to learn to imagine the future for different reasons and in different ways, which is important because imagining the future is what generates hope and fear, sense-making and meaning, driving our expectations, disappointments and willingness to invest or to change. Anticipation is a powerful force shaping what we see and do and affects our decision-making, which is essential as certain decisions need to be made in advance. Futures literacy is a capability that offers insights into both the reasons and the methods humans deploy when they anticipate (<https://en.unesco.org/themes/futures-literacy>). **If our youth understand and accept the concept of this 'Discipline of Anticipation', they will be able to actively** observe patterns and use them to anticipate potential scenarios that could happen in the future. This is a powerful concept because it will allow the students to practice a mindset that even minimal preparation can change the outcome significantly. This will expand our scope of knowledge as we will be able to see and assess more options. Furthermore, through practicing this mindset, students also practice sustainability, inclusiveness, prosperity, balance, and peace. This is another way that our youths can efficiently prepare themselves for any scenario they might face in the future.

Activities proposed:

1. Analyze existing pedagogies;
2. Devise pedagogical principles and strategies by blending the concepts of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), Global Citizenship Education

(GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as guidelines for implementation;

3. Train teachers at ASPnet member schools;
4. Try out new pedagogies with ASPnet members.

Thailand strongly believes that our proposed topics would respond to the situation expected in our region in the next few years. We also hope that joint cooperation among countries in this region would enable us to build a promising future for children and youth, who will build peace and bring prosperity to future society.

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Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO

Mr. Abraão Ribeiro MENDONCA



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Komisaun
Nasionál Timor-Leste
ba UNESCO

Timor-Leste
National Commission
for UNESCO

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO, I am delighted to express my deepest appreciation to the Korean National Commission for UNESCO for promoting mutual partnerships and collaboration at the sub-regional, regional and interregional level in order to address common issues affecting us and to tackle future common challenges in East and Southeast Asia.

I assure you that this country Survey Report reveals significant information about the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO (TLNCU) and will serve as a milestone to strengthen future cooperation associated with priority activities in liaison with the UNESCO framework. Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Your Excellency, Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) and the Korean government for the continued support given to all National Commissions in the region, and the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO in particular, on this joint collaboration survey.

Prior to concluding, I would also like to give my thanks and reiterate the commitment of Timor-Leste to collaborate with other National Commissions in diverse ways on promoting and maintaining Development and Peace throughout future joint projects on regional levels.

Francisco BARRETO
Secretary Executive
Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO

1. INTRODUCTION

National Commissions for UNESCO are vital for the elaboration, execution and evaluation of UNESCO's programs. Strong and effective National Commissions constitute an invaluable asset for UNESCO, particularly within the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda (including the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs) and its implementation at the country level. Regional cooperation, both among National Commissions and between National Commissions and other members of the UNESCO family, is more necessary than ever in order to effectively tackle the challenges of the Agenda 2030 in the Asia-Pacific. National Commissions have also become spearheads of reform, embodying a dynamic and positive movement to rethink **UNESCO's** way of working, and to improve impact and influence. This survey report is part of a joint preliminary survey project by 10 National Commissions in East and Southeast Asia. The project aims to promote partnerships, and collaborative working projects at the sub regional level in particular, to address common issues affecting National Commissions in East and Southeast Asia, by gathering information about individual National Commissions and identifying common needs in the areas of UNESCO's competence.

This survey report includes general information about the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO (TLNCU) that provides the context of the report, which has been elaborated based on three main aspects and perspectives. First, looking to the past, information is given regarding **TLNCU's** organizational structure, legal status, and budget structure, the historical background of Timor-Leste, the birth of TLNCU and its major contributions to the development process. Second, regarding the present situation, the report provides information concerning the main programme and activities implemented by TLNCU, including networks and challenges. The third section, regarding future priorities of TLNCU, consists of common challenges and proposals for future joint project cooperation. This survey is the first conducted since TLNCU was established in 2009, and shows the outstanding commitment of TLNCU to promoting an organizational framework which disseminates crucial information amongst NatComs in the Asia-

Pacific region. It represents a milestone and open gate for the possibilities of future collaborative partnership, through information sharing regarding TLNCU's common needs based on organization strategic planning and through priority activities associated with UNESCO's framework which proposes to contribute to the country development process according to the 2011-2030 national action plan and Strategic Development Plan (SDP), with a process that serves, *slowly but always*, to address the concept of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied for this survey, with the main primary source data obtained through interviews, while secondary data was derived from organization data including from various scholars and publications. The survey assessment derived secondary data from survey analysis. In general, interviews were conducted to get general information about the Timor-Leste National Commission (TLNCU), including historical background, present and future priorities, while data about ICH education was collected to propose a future joint project. On the other hand, the interviews with government bodies (the Minister of Education and Secretary of State for Art and Culture of Timor-Leste) as respondents were used to get information about inclusion and transmission of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) into the education system in Timor-Leste, and provide information about background of Timor-Leste as a UNESCO Member State, including partnership cooperation about programme implementation and the process of ratification of the UNESCO Convention.

2.1. SURVEY SCOPE

This survey covers a group of respondents from three related institutions (described in the following bullet points) that form the key partnership in the overall long-term progress of the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO (TLNCU). This group consists of TLNCU itself, as well as the Ministry of Education

and the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture of Timor-Leste (SSAC).

2.1.1. TIMOR-LESTE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO (TLNCU)

From TLNCU a total of eight (8) interviews were conducted, six (6) with programme coordinators and two (2) with Secretaries-General (the current Secretary-General and the former Secretary-General for the 2010-2013 period). From the programme coordinators there were four (4) respondents from the *Strategy and Programme Division* (consisting of four sub-divisions: Education, Science, Culture, and Communication and Information), and two (2) respondents from the *Administration and Management Division* (consisting of two sub-divisions: Administration and Human Resources, including finance coordinators).

Based on the report contents, programme coordinator respondents (Strategy and Programme Division) provided information about three aspects. The first, regarding the past, implemented a reveal of previous activities and programmes by each sub-division. The second, regarding the present, provided information about main programmes and activities (current areas and activity focus, partnership networks, and challenges of current programme implementation). And the third, regarding the future, informed of suggestions for future joint projects and proposals.

Meanwhile two other programme coordinators (Administration and Management Division), both from administration and human resources including a finance coordinator, have provided related information concerning organizational structure and a general revealing of TLNCU financial sources. On the other side, the TLNCU Secretaries-General (former and current) interview targets as such provide general information about TLNCU (legal status, birth of TLNCU and chronology, key partnerships, previous activities and programmes, current area of focus and future organizational priorities).

2.1.2. MINISTER OF EDUCATION (ME) OF TIMOR-LESTE

In this survey, respondents from government bodies such as the Ministry of Education of Timor-Leste provide information concerning future cooperation of joint project proposals concerning the implementation of ICH integration into the education system in Timor-Leste. There are two groups of respondents. The first are school directors (pre-secondary and secondary school), with a total of 41 respondents of which 13 are from pre-secondary schools and 28 from secondary schools (details described in section 6.3.1). The second are decision makers from the Ministry of Education (general directors and coordinators), such as the Director General of pre-school, basic and non-formal education, and national curriculum coordinator. The main goal for the interviews with school directors is to get current information about implementation of related ICH subjects, including challenges and future priorities, as well method of implementation. Meanwhile, the curriculum coordinators, including general and national ministry education directors, provide the following related information:

- o Policy on support for the implementation of ICH education.
- o Importance on pursuing the implementation of ICH into the education system in Timor-Leste and related challenges
- o Available resources for ICH-related programme development and resources needed for the development of ICH education.
- o Expected benefit and contribution of ICH networking

2.1.3. STATE SECRETARIAT OF ARTS AND CULTURE (SSAC), TIMOR-LESTE

The future joint project proposal concerning ICH education is one of TLNCU's priorities, and an important target for the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture (SSAC) which is in charge of cultural matters for both Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage. The National Director of Cultural Heritage provides related information about the background of Timor-Leste as a UNESCO Member State **and ratification of UNESCO's Cultural Conventions. The main information** provided concerning future joint project proposals on inclusion of ICH into the education system is as follows:

- o The importance of integration of ICH into the learning process
- o Culture policy to support implementation of ICH education
- o Future priorities of an integration culture policy and activity framework into the education curriculum such as expected benefits and contribution of ICH networking (collaboration and exchange of pedagogical and technical resources and collaborative research programme).

3. ORGANIZATION PROFILE

3.1. STRUCTURE

Under the TLNCU organizational structure there are two divisions (Strategic and Programme Division and Administration Management Division) which consist of seven subdivisions (Appendix 1: TLNCU organizational structure). To drive organization activities there are 23 staff, as the main indicator and key driver of the implementation of overall related programmes (Appendix 2: TLNCU staff numbers). On the other side, since the establishment of the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO (TLNCU) in 2009, the organization was led by a chairperson for one year, with four persons in charge as Secretary-General directly following this period until the end of their periods of mandate (Appendix 3: Secretary-General and period of mandate). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education (ME) and State Secretariat of Arts and Culture (SSAC) have been the main key partners on programme implementation, of which a majority of activities are implemented by TL-NATCOM aligned with the **Government's** strategic plan.

3.2. LEGAL STATUS AND FUNCTION

The Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO legally (decree law no.29/2014) belongs to the Ministry of Education (ME) as described in the general provisions of article 1: **"The** Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO is constituted, hereinafter referred to as the Commission. The Commission is a legal person governed by public law, endowed with legal

personality, administrative and financial autonomy and its own assets, without prejudice to the tutelage and superintendence of the Minister of **Education.**” Meanwhile, Article 2 on the assignments and main functions of the National Commission is as follows:

- To issue opinions and recommendations to the Government regarding UNESCO's programs, objectives and achievements, including the Conventions;
- To establish an effective link with the UNESCO General Secretariat, with UNESCO representation in Jakarta and Timor-Leste, as well as with the National Commissions and other cooperative bodies of the other UNESCO Member States;
- To raise, coordinate and convey, through the Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Government Institution responsible for the area of Art and Culture, candidate projects for the program of participation, and to promote the participation of national specialists in the tasks of the UNESCO, both in central services, at the headquarters, and in the Organization's various programs;
- To carry out the programs and activities foreseen in the Strategic Plan and in the Action Plans of the Commission, approved by the General Council;
- To support the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste to UNESCO;
- To participate in the Timor-Leste Delegation in the General Conference and in other UNESCO Conferences or activities and to issue within the scope of the same opinions and recommendations;
- To disseminate and publish UNESCO's objectives and achievements;
- Other related activities within the scope of the competences attributed to it.

3.3. BUDGET STRUCTURE

Functionally, activities implemented by TLNCU are aligned with the ministries, while administratively belonging to the Ministry of Education (ME). TLNCU accesses permanent funds derived from the state budget through the Ministry of Education, which mainly covers payroll for staff. Financial challenges have occurred up to the present day, such as monthly payments for staff that are

sometimes postponed for about three months due to the political situation associated with the assessed conditions of the annual budget.

Meanwhile, driving the organization for overall TLNCU activities depends on donors such as international funds and the Ministry of Education. The greatest amount of fully executed funds was in 2016 at about \$1,064,989.00 (\$540,727.00 from international funds and \$524,262.00 from state party contributions). Based on information by the TLNCU finance department on the past four years including the current year 2020, the main source of finances is international donors such as UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO Jakarta, Conoco Phillips and the U.S. Embassy. Meanwhile, state party contributions are mainly from a single source such as the Minister of Education of Timor-Leste (Appendix 4: Details of TLNCU financial sources, from 2016 – 2020).

Fiscal Year	Approved Budget		Total/Year
	International funds	State party	
2016	\$ 540,727.00	\$ 524,262.00	\$ 1,064,989.00
2017	\$ 48,151.30	\$ 602,554.20	\$ 650,705.50
2018	\$ 224,028.00	\$ 218,700.00	\$ 442,728.00
2019	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 245,000.00
2020	\$ 486,008.00	\$ -	\$ 486,008.00
Total	\$ 1,363,914.30	\$ 1,525,516.20	\$ 2,889,430.50

Taken from 5 years of TLNCU financial sources from 2016 - 2020

4. PAST: CHRONOLOGY OF TLNCU

4.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MEMBER STATE

While Timor-Leste became the first new sovereign state of the 21st century on 20 May 2002, UNESCO has had an active presence in Timor-Leste⁷³ since the

⁷³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2003/07/73842-unesco-chief-visits-indonesia-india-and-timor-leste>

end of 1999 when the agency initiated a joint project to assist in the heritage restoration of the Uma-Fukun Building (a colonial Portuguese building) in Dili Harbor in the center of town. One year after the independence, Timor-Leste became the 189th and newest UNESCO state member in June 2003 (17 years ago). Chronologically, it began when former president of Timor-Leste H.E. Xanana Gusmão announced his country's intention to become a member of UNESCO in a letter to the organization's Director-General on January 2003, in which on behalf of the state Mr. Gusmão said,⁷⁴ *"UNESCO has long been a reference to peace-loving peoples throughout the world. Accordingly, the time has come for Timor-Leste to become a Member State of UNESCO in our overall process of integration into the international community."*

The presence of Timor-Leste in the General Conference in Paris in 2003 was very significant moment, which at the same time awarded Mr. Gusmão with the UNESCO Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize. This was a milestone for Timor-Leste in starting up a strong connection with UNESCO with the task to promote dialogue based on respect for the values and the dignity of each culture and its goal to ultimately bring peace to the minds of the people and world.

Meanwhile, Timor-Leste was visited in July 2003 by UNESCO Director-General Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, as the first official visit.



General conference 2003. **President Timor-Leste H.E. Gusmão receives the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize from the hand of UNESCO's Director-General Mr. Koichiro Matsuura (© UNESCO/Cyril Bailleul).**

⁷⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/timor-leste/timor-leste-become-member-unesco>

Since becoming a UNESCO member, the state has walked alongside it on monitoring and assistance in the field of cultural heritage. In 2009, the UNESCO Director-General encouraged Timor-Leste to start the procedure to ratify the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), saying that a high commitment from **UNESCO's side would assist in the identification of intangible heritage using ICH funds** once the 2003 convention is ratified. Meanwhile, other priority sectors in the field of science education were also long-term priorities.

4.2. RATIFICATION OF THE UNESCO CONVENTION

In 2015, the National Parliament of Timor-Leste unanimously adopted the UNESCO Convention⁷⁵ which was published in the Journal of the Republic, and in 2016 the state ratified three UNESCO Cultural Conventions⁷⁶ (conventions from 1972, 2003 and 2005). The ratification of the conventions provided a significant way forward on the collaboration process to promote cultural matters which aim to provide a benefit for long term sustainability. As a member of the United Nations with the Board's mission to accomplish the provision of such assistance for the implementation of activities, UNESCO has a mandate to empower cultural activities associated with national strategy plans including other sectors such as education, science and communication. Importantly, the ratification of the Cultural Conventions allows Timor-Leste to be able to count on technical and financial support from UNESCO, which binds the state of Timor-Leste to the promotion of the production, access and enjoyment of culture.

4.3. BIRTH OF TLNCU

The Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO (TLNCU) was established on April 2009 and legally belongs to the Ministry of Education as described in the general provisions of Articles 1 and 2 (provisions and main function) based on

⁷⁵ Government of Timor-Leste "*UNESCO cultural convention ratified by the National Parliament of Timor-leste*" (<http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=13392&lang=en>) 2015

⁷⁶ Governo Timor-Leste "*Konvensaun UNESCO Ratifika husi Parlamentu Nasionál Timor-Leste*" (<http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=13392&lang=tp>) 2015

decree law no.29/2014 on the legal status of the National Commission. The state announced its membership with UNESCO in 2003, which requires all member states to establish a National Commission on a permanent basis, for the aim of playing an important role as a national cooperative body, and for the purpose of associating their governmental and non-governmental bodies. This network plays a significant role in the liaison with partners, the coordination of activities and **the promotion of UNESCO's visibility at the country level.**

The formal document⁷⁷ speech of the former prime minister of Timor-Leste on the occasion of the inauguration of TLNCU on April 2009 mentions that *"historically, it was the participation of Timor-Leste at the General Conference in Paris 2003 and the integration of Timor-Leste as a new UNESCO state member that opened the gate to a strong relationship including the milestone of establishing a National Commission."* However, subsequent political upheavals delayed the formation of the National Commission, which was established six years later after becoming a state member. Associated with the UNESCO framework, the National Commission takes a leading role in supporting the Timor-Leste government to advance goals in science, education and culture.

Acting as **agencies of consultation, liaison and information**, and **mobilizing and coordinating partnerships** with national partners including civil society, the National Commissions also make substantial contributions in the advancement of UNESCO's objectives and in the implementation of its programme⁷⁸.

Meanwhile, the former TLNCU Secretary-General (2010-2013) said in her interview that *"Chronologically, before TLNCU was born, there was an organization called the National Commission for Education which existed in 2007 with a key role in the implementation of the mother tongue project joint collaboration with the Minister of Education. Two years later the project was handed over to TLNCU, which is the standing organization at the moment."* Furthermore, a critical situation was faced by the organization which was limited

⁷⁷ http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/20090423_pm_UNESCO_eng.pdf

⁷⁸ <https://en.unesco.org/countries/member-states>

in both financial and human resources to drive activity. In 2012, the Ministry of Education initiated an integrated TLNCU strategy plan into the government's annual budget to support the organization's activities. Meanwhile, TLNCU has actively accessed UNESCO funds since 2013 through the Participation Programme.

4.4. PARTICIPATION OF TLNCU A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In October 2009, six months after TLNCU was established, organization chair Ms. Kirsty Sword Gusmão visited the Director-General of UNESCO and presented the Timor-Leste country programme document, which defines UNESCO's strategic interventions in the implementation of a five-year strategy plan⁷⁹. Reports were made during her visit about participation of the new body in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry for Culture, more specifically about progress made thus far in the functioning of the new National Commission, and the commitment made to strengthen cooperation with other commissions in the region. Since the birth of the organization the new commission's highlighted priorities⁸⁰ and important pillars have aligned with UNESCO goals and have liaised with **government's strategic development plan in areas such as:**

- Early childhood education, with a focus on involving parents in this process;
- Curriculum development for the nine years of basic education, focusing on scientific education including professional development for teachers and the development of science laboratory facilities;
- Cultural and educational institutional development, in particular in the establishment of a national library and museum, national music and fine arts schools and regional cultural centres.
- Language policy and cultural development, including preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of Timor-Leste

⁷⁹ <https://unmit.unmissions.org/director-general-meets-kirsty-sword-gusmao>

⁸⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/timor-leste/unescos-new-national-commission-timor-leste-launches-cultural-and-educational>

Information obtained from the former TLNCU Secretary-General (2010-2013) reveals a first mother tongue project implemented on 2012, and another project set up in the same year, namely the Center of Study for Science and Math (CSSM). Since 2009, TLNCU has enhanced mutual joint project cooperation with UNESCO on the establishment of a national museum. The project entitled "Rebuilding social cohesion of communities through National Museum of Timor-Leste and Cultural Heritage Education" was developed with the Ministers of Education and Culture along with donors⁸¹. Although the continuity of the project is not clearly set in place on the ground, it is significant in being able to contribute to an important step forward for building stability and peace in the region.

Meanwhile, there are main related activities implemented by the Strategic and Programme Division of TLNCU through a subdivision strategy plan in the field of education, science, and culture, as well as communication and information. Activities conducted commonly include setting up liaisons with government action plans with strong collaboration with national and international key stakeholders including government bodies from line ministries.

4.4.1. EDUCATION

4.4.1.1. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (2012-2018)

At the time of the organization's establishment in 2009, TLNCU began work on urgent needs facing the country. Together with line ministries such as the Ministry of Education (ME) and the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture (SSAC), a focus on the question of language policy was highlighted such as the promotion of mother-tongue education, through a pilot project implementation known as Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). The scope of the project was the development of teacher training modules with the principle of a project framework to develop curriculums based on government standards during a period of implementation from 2012-2018. It was an initiative from the

⁸¹ <https://unmit.unmissions.org/director-general-meets-kirsty-sword-gusmao>

Ministry of Education with the principal objective being the improvement of learning outcomes from the pre-school level of the first cycle of basic education. The project ended in 2018, with the fantastic result that MTB-MLE schools ranked higher among public schools and CAFE schools.

There were challenges during the implementation of the project. First, most school directors found project implementation inconvenient (lack of advocacy from the Ministry of Education to the National and Educational leaders). Second, **the Ministry of Education's policies were not made public in the integration of the MTB-MLE programme in the Ministry's planning. And third, there was a mixing of political issues in the policies with an effect that led to less support from parents and families.**

4.4.1.2. Associated School Network (2019)

The Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) aims to promote quality education in pursuit of peace and sustainable development in Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) that focuses on various perspectives such as: peace and human rights, intercultural understanding, citizenship education, respect for diversity, tolerance, inclusivity, climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable consumption.

The main objectives of ASPnet are as follows. First, to integrate GCED and ESD into the teaching and learning processes of ASPnet schools. Second, to experiment with innovative approaches on GCED and ESD through ASPnet schools. Third, to strengthen the sharing of information, experiences and good practices among ASPnet schools. The main partners for this project were UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Health, and the Secretariat of State of the Environment. Meanwhile, there were challenges for project implementation as follows. First, a lack of permanent funds for these activities and a budget for them that depended on Participation Programme funds. Second, a lack of knowledge of the context of Global Citizenship Education (GCED), and a resulting lack of teachers applying

GCED activities. Third, some teachers of ASPnet school were still beholden to a money-oriented character (namely, no activities for no money) even though some activities required no money in their application. Fourth, some schools did not provide an activity report and a financial management system by teachers was lacking, with an execution that was not implemented in the proper manner.

4.4.2. SCIENCE

4.4.2.1. Social inclusion project (2015-2016)

In December 2015, TLNCU together with UNESCO Jakarta launched a project on promoting social inclusion through public policies in Timor-Leste. With the leadership of national implementation partners, TLNCU and the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS), national stakeholders and international partners were brought together for a common effort to build national capacity to design inclusive public policies. The concept of social inclusion is at the heart of the 2030 Development Agenda⁸², in liaison with the country's **Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030)**.

The main objective of the project was to strengthen national capacity in Timor-Leste to assess and reform social policy and regulatory frameworks to increase inclusiveness and ensure the equal enjoyment of human rights by all, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Some challenges occurred, as follows. First, most participants lacked knowledge of the concept of social inclusion concept in its full breadth and complexity. Second, members of the working group were mostly government representatives and high level decision makers such general directors and national directors, who sometimes had to skip meetings and attend others that took priority.

4.4.2.2. National training for teachers (2009 – 2011)

Teacher training was conducted for junior and high schools, with main partners such as the Ministry of Education and INFORDEPE (*Instituto Nacional de*

⁸² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

Formação de Docentes e Profissionais da Educação or Timor-Leste Teacher Training Institute, a teacher training institute in Timor-Leste). Financial sources were derived from UNESCO Paris through the Participation Programme. Meanwhile, related activities had been conducted since 2003 such as dinosaur exhibitions. Students were the main target to learn the pre-history of geology. The activities were supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Higher Education, as well as Monash University. The challenges faced were as follows. First, activities that were not merged with the curriculum and a lack of laboratory materials. Second, a limited exhibition space. Third, the lack of a national science museum. Fourth, materials and equipment ordered by the curriculum department that were not linked to the curriculum. Fifth, a lack of materials to distribute to schools.

In 2012, TLNCU through the Center of Study for Science and Math (CSSM) provided national training for secondary school teachers, through a method using lab equipment. The equipment was facilitated by the Ministry of Education through the curriculum department. On the other side was a gradually **implemented annual event since 2012 known as "World Science Day"**. The context of the activity is to advocate knowledge of science, which involves a number of teachers and group students as school representatives (including at the pre-secondary, secondary and university level). Main financial sources for the event derive from the Participation Programme and Conoco Phillips Timor-Leste.

4.4.2.3. Pilot training for teachers of basic education (2013 - 2014)

This pilot training setup for the third cycle covered 26 schools around the country. The activities were supported by the Ministry of Education and INFORDEPE (Timor-Leste Teacher Training Institute). The Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) was the main financial backer for this project, with an objective to pilot the hands-on activities method developed by the trainers in liaison with science and mathematics subjects. The main barriers were the challenges faced with a continuity of method that does not transmit well in the schools, and lack of materials for practice at schools.

4.4.2.4. Hands-on training for physics, chemistry and biology (2012-2014)

The training context focus was science (physics, chemistry and biology) for secondary schools (grade 10) through development of a hands-on manual for the subjects based on the curriculum. This served as references on enhancing capacity of teaching methods on the implementation of science through classroom experiments. The challenges faced were a lack of funding for follow-up and monitoring the implementation of the training in the field. The main partners were the Ministry of Education, INFORDEPE (Timor-Leste Teacher Training Institute), and the Australian Embassy.

4.4.2.5. Timor-Leste quality education for all (2015-2017)

This project was implemented over three years (2015-2017) under the context of a revised national curriculum of 3rd cycle science and mathematics for basic education (7th - 9th grade). The main partners were the Ministry of Education, INFORDEPE (Timor-Leste Teacher Training Institute), UNESCO Jakarta, and KOICA. There were a variety of objectives, as follows. First, to develop didactic resources for areas such as manual practice and guidelines (Matadalan) for rock and exercise books. Second, to develop teacher training and school monitoring. **And third, to establish the “Center for the Study of Science and Mathematics”** science and mathematics laboratory. The complicated bureaucracy within the Ministry of Education and limited books were challenges to respond to in terms of sustainability.

Other related activities were conducted by the science subdivision which organized pedagogical training with LAMAP foundation trainers from Paris in 2015. The context was the sharing of experiences on IBSE best practices developed by LAMAP with the fundamental principle of teaching Science and Mathematics for the teachers and finalists of students of higher education. The partners for this activity were the Ministry of Education and INFORDEPE (Timor-Leste Teacher Training Institute), while financial support came from the UNESCO Participation Programme and Paris LAMAP Foundation. Furthermore, a green school project

was implemented in 2017 as a pilot project which covered 4 schools. The main partners for this project consisted of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, including UNESCO Jakarta. The lack of commitment and motivation to implement the project at site were challenges, while financial barriers to drive the project included the lack of a permanent budget.

4.4.3. CULTURE

The ratification of the UNESCO Cultural Conventions⁸³ was a vision and guideline for the long-term perspective to empower overall cultural activity through a national policy framework including preservation and safeguarding of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. There is a national policy which was legally set in place on the importance of safeguarding Timor-Leste cultural heritage through government resolution no 24/2009, on the 18th of November. This resolution accepted fundamental roles such as coordination and harmonization among many different interveners which aim to drive cultural activities including preservation and safeguarding of both tangible and intangible heritage.

4.4.3.1. Research projects on traditional houses as cultural heritage (2016-2019)

The Culture Subdivision of TLNCU conducted research projects (qualitative and quantitative studies) concerning the preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage through promotion of sustainability of traditional houses in Timor-Leste over a period of implementation of four years (2016-2019). Since 2016 TLNCU has established a network with the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture (SSAC), with the purpose of coordinating an overall research framework and enlightening cooperation in the field of culture. The project implementation took place over two periodic stages, with a qualitative study conducted from 2016-2018 and a quantitative study that continued directly after it (2018-2019). The main proposed objectives of the study were as follows. First, to identify the possibility

⁸³ Government of Timor-Leste "*UNESCO Cultural Conventions ratified by the National Parliament of Timor-Leste*" (<http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=13392&lang=en>) 2015

of policy development concerning sustainability of traditional houses in Timor-Leste. Second, to reveal various indicators with an impact on the existence of traditional houses in Timor-Leste. Third, to statistically identify or establish a cultural data base concerning the cultural heritage of Timor-Leste traditional houses, which would be references for the Timor-Leste government and society on responding for long term sustainability in liaison with the 1972 and 2003 UNESCO Conventions.

The studies reveal the level of destruction of traditional houses (cross cutting issues) and statistically identify the number of houses that could be safeguarded immediately (including those abandoned by the local community, subject to destruction by the post-conflict background and architectural disvalue). The overall impact from social transformation, globalization and the long duration of the post-conflict background were considered as main indicators which have affected Timorese society,⁸⁴ which have an impact on both the tangible and intangible aspect. The main challenges that occurred included the respondents (the oldest ones) as well as their houses themselves when located in remote areas, namely areas that lack infrastructure and with very poor road conditions, which affected the research project which had a constrained period of time in which to implement it.

4.4.3.2. Establishment of Timor-Leste National Committee for ICH

On the commitment to implement the 2003 UNESCO Convention framework (ratified in 2016), the Timor-Leste government came together with national stakeholders to begin the establishment of a National Committee of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) on April 2019, which aims to promote, conserve and safeguard cultural activity on national living heritages. The Timor-Leste National Committee of Intangible Cultural Heritages (TL-NCICH) has been formally endorsed by the Timor-Leste Government through the Secretary of State of Art and Culture (SEAC) of which the structure is consistent with decision makers in inter-ministerial cooperation including NGOs and international agencies. This was

⁸⁴ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283479419_Uma_lulik_iha_Timor-Leste_matenek_tradisional_arkitetoniku_no_pratika

a starting point and an opened gate for Timor-Leste on works with ICH implementation. As a national vocal point, TLNCU has a leading role in gathering key national stakeholders, and leads as vice president in coordinating committee activities and processing overall progress with UNESCO Headquarters (Appendix 5: Structure of Timor-Leste National Committee for ICH). Currently, the first task of the committee has been accomplished with submission of Tais (traditional handcraft) to UNESCO for the Urgent Safeguarding List (submission done in March and considered as tentative for the list for 2021)⁸⁵.

4.4.4. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

4.4.4.1. Annual Promotion (2014 - 2019)

The annual promotion activities were implemented gradually over four years (from 2014-2019), with the main context to disseminate and advocate information about the role of UNESCO and more specifically about TLNCU through overall related activities and programmes implemented by each TLNCU subdivision concerned with education, science, and culture, including communication and information. A number of municipalities were targeted for the implementation of these activities, and the transmission of information on **communities' levels included a number of villages with high participation from** local residents. UNESCO Paris through the Participation Programme was the main financial source for this activity. Meanwhile, the challenges included minimal participation from the government or line ministries.

4.4.4.2. Memory of the World (2016 - 2019)

The Memory of the World (MoW) committee in Timor-Leste was established in 2016, with the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture (SSAC) as well as UNESCO Jakarta as main partners for project implementation. The context of this MoW is the highlighting the importance of conservation and safeguarding documents and audiovisual materials in Timor-Leste. The main challenges in driving this activity

⁸⁵ https://ich.unesco.org/en/files-2021-under-process-01119?select_country=00220&select_type=all#table_cand

were barriers to opening up information in the lack of significant progress on a national archive, and a lack of government participation on the other side.

5. PRESENT: MAIN PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES OF TLNCU

The following shows the main programme and activities implemented by TLNCU over the 2020 – 2021 period based on each subdivision strategy programme.

5.1. EDUCATION

5.1.1. SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ON TOURISM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

This current programme for 2020 is to enhance national training on an **action-oriented teacher's guidebook of tourism** vocational education for sustainable development in Timor-Leste. This capacity-building training focuses on four main productive subjects found in the Tourism schools in Timor-Leste, namely communicating in English for tourism, communication and marketing for tourism, reception and housekeeping techniques, and housekeeping and techniques for tourism and travel.

The objective of this training is to share the knowledge and experiences on how to implement the activities and sub-activities of tourism and hospitality in Timor-Leste, and to enhance the experiences and knowledge and skills for the teachers from lessons learned and best practices, including exploring the implementation of Tourism Education for Sustainable Development. The main partners for this programme are the UNESCO Cluster Office in Jakarta, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Directorate-General of Secondary Technical Vocational Schools). Meanwhile, challenges faced were as follows:

- A limited budget for project implementation.
- Time constraints for a short period of implementation, with an impact in terms of lack of preparation on developing guidebooks and national training.

- The policy makers from the Ministry Education who participated in the pre-training were not active in the process of elaborating the guidebook.
- As most tourism schools in Timor-Leste were converted from public schools a few years ago, the teachers of tourism schools still lack knowledge and understanding of ESD linked with tourism and hospitality.
- Lack of knowledge among policy makers about national and technical-vocational curriculums. In reality, positions are based on political appointment instead of merit.

5.1.2. BRIDGE TIMOR-LESTE (CLC PROJECT)

The main objective of the project is to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs and the Education 2030 Agenda mainly through non-formal education in Timor-Leste, and improving the quality of life of marginalized groups and communities through promotion of non-formal education at both the community and national level, including achieving SDG 4 and realizing the Incheon Declaration through non-formal education. The project is funded by the Korean Government through KNCU. This CLC project starting this year in 2020 has the Ministry of Education of Timor-Leste through the Non-Formal Education Department as the main partner for the project. Challenges such the global COVID-19 pandemic have an impact on the project implementation timeline.

5.1.3. ICH EDUCATION SURVEY

Since July 1 2020, the TLNCU research team has been conducting a survey about **ICH education with "Inclusion and transmission of ICH into the education system in Timor-Leste" as the theme with a goal of having youths of Timor-Leste well educated and knowledgeable on ICH and education for sustainable development.** The objective of the survey is to accumulate data concerning future possibilities to integrate ICH education into the learning system in Timor-Leste.

This is based on data collection with a number of school directors (including pre-secondary and secondary schools) and decision makers from line ministries such as the Minister of Education and Secretary of State for Arts and Culture (see

methodology described on chapter 2). The area of study covers seven sub-districts which includes 41 schools, and respondents consist of school directors of which 13 are at pre-secondary schools and 28 at secondary schools (Appendix 6: Study areas and number of targeted schools). From the total number of schools (including pre-secondary and secondary), data collection was included for 33 public and 8 private schools. General data collection was conducted in the capital of Dili as a study area due to lifestyle changes from the impact of globalization being mainly centered in the capital.

Knowledge or level awareness of both teachers and students in the field of ICH was low. Data indicated about 29 (70.7%) such responses from teachers, while 33 (80.5%) responses came from students (Appendix 7: level of knowledge teacher and students on ICH). The implementation of ICH education is very important for students, with about 30 (73.2%) respondents in favor. One can conclude that the integration of ICH education into the learning system is a priority according to data indicated; 27 (67.5%) of respondents indicated a high commitment to implement ICH education (Appendix 8: Importance of integration of ICH education). On the other hand, the priority ICH related subjects have the potential to find a place in the learning system such as in indigenous knowledge, culture events, and tradition (Appendix 9: Priority potential ICH related subjects). Meanwhile, concerning models to be adopted from the integration of ICH education data, 25 (61%) of respondents preferred to adopt both formal and non-formal approaches (Appendix 10: ICH education adoption model). For the non-formal approach, it is required to setup an extracurricular method which could be applied on the weekend, or to develop a cultural museum (cultural center) to support extracurricular activities. Meanwhile, related resources considered as priority for future ICH programme development include human resources, learning materials, teacher training, and programme syllabus or outlines/curriculum (Appendix 11: resources for the development of ICH).

There are various challenges with both financial and human resources as main indicators, including lack of teacher knowledge in the ICH field and lack of basic infrastructure provided as barriers to the implementation process. Furthermore, most respondents have the communication barrier of being unaware of how to

explore the internet and having limited internet network access, giving them no possibility to get data in online form. This necessitates meeting the respondents directly on site or in school, while some respondents are only available in the morning or afternoon and depending on daily school activities. Meanwhile, there is difficulty of access to a number of schools located in remote areas and which require crossing the sea, specifically those on Atauro Island. This has an impact on time and works as a constraint due to the unpredictability of the boat schedule.

5.2. SCIENCE

5.2.1. STRENGTHENING SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION IN TIMOR-LESTE

Currently, the science subdivision through the Center of Study for Science and Math (CSSM) conducts an activity known as Strengthening Science and Mathematics which targets primary education in Timor-Leste for the 2020-2021 period. The objective is to support additional materials for primary education and teacher training for the teachers of primary education, with the main partners being the Ministry of Education, INFORDEPE (Timor-Leste Teacher Training Institute), UNESCO Jakarta, and the Japanese government. The complex bureaucracy and global cases of COVID-19 are challenges for project implementation given time constraint concerns.

5.2.2. WORLD SCIENCE DAY

From 2020-2021, the science sub-division planned to host a World Science Day event as one of the annual calendar events gradually implemented by the Center of Study for Science and Math (CSSM). The main context for this event is to commemorate World Science Day, and this year (2020) to highlight a national Olympic hands-on activity in order to motivate students in learning science and mathematics. The main partners for this event are the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture, Santos (international oil company) and UNESCO Jakarta.

5.2.3. NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NOMINATION MAB SITE

From the current year of 2020, teamwork is being led by TLNCU through the science subdivision to conduct various consultation meetings with the national key stakeholders on discussions about the nomination of Nino Koni Santana National Park as Timor-Leste's Man and the Biosphere site (MAB) site. The effort to establish a national steering committee is still ongoing and at a standstill due to political circumstances and the global COVID-19 pandemic as barriers for the further implementation. The key stakeholders consist of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, including the Ministry of Tourism.

5.2.4. UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS

Currently, the TLNCU science division is working on the effort to process and design a UNESCO Global Geopark. The main objective of the project is to disseminate information about Timor-Leste aspiring toward a UNESCO Global Geopark with the purpose of sharing information on the community level. The main stakeholders include the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries as well as the Ministry of Tourism. However, the process is still ongoing and at a standstill, due to a lack of funds for a number of reasons among which the global COVID-19 pandemic is the main cause.

5.3. CULTURE

5.3.1. RESEARCH PROJECT ON CULTURAL HERITAGE (QUANTITATIVE STUDY)

The context of the current culture activity for the 2020-2021 period (preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of Timor-Leste traditional houses) is an extended project with the quantitative study method applied to the implementation process. The process is still ongoing and based on its framework will cover four (4) subdistricts consisting of two municipalities (Lautem and Viqueque). There are two main objectives proposed by the study. First, to

identify the possibility of policy development concerning sustainability of traditional houses in underdeveloped countries, specifically in Timor-Leste. And second, to reveal various indicators with an impact on the existence of traditional houses in Timor-Leste.

The qualitative study identifies a number of traditional houses that have been destroyed and abandoned by local communities due to social transformation, globalization impacts and the enduring post-conflict background considered as main indicators which have affected Timorese society.⁸⁶ This impact on both the tangible and intangible aspects of Timor-Leste traditional houses is seen in liaison with the UNESCO Convention. Challenges faced included the respondents (the oldest ones) as well as their houses themselves which were mostly located in remote areas, namely areas that lack infrastructure and with very poor road conditions, which affected the research project which had a constrained period of time in which to implement it. On the other hand, limited financial resources served as the main obstacle to expanding the project. Meanwhile, the global COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge for project implementation in its impact on field monitoring activities and data insertion, while the poor internet connection in rural areas is the main obstacle to organizing the task.

5.3.2. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The resource development programme focuses on development of traditional stories for early grade reading in 3 languages for multilingual education. The implementation workshop utilized tools for the development of local history, working together with communities on developing their own stories into written stories using text. Publication is planned for the end of 2020 through book distribution to main partners such as local leaders and communities, including a number of schools that are targeted for project implementation.

The resource development team is currently working through writing traditional stories in 3 languages over an area covering two municipalities in the region

⁸⁶ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283479419_Uma_lulik_iha_Timor-Leste_matenek_tradisional_arkitetoniku_no_pratika

(Bobonaro and Ermera). The main objective for this resource development programme is to develop local history through information gathering from a number of actors such as the local community (oldest generation) and youth including local leaders. The main national partnership on this resource development programme is the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture (SSAC) of Timor-Leste. Meanwhile, there are technical challenges in implementing the activity such as illiteracy among most of the oldest which makes the writing process difficult, including difficulties in exploring native languages to transcribe and transform terms and context into official languages.

5.3.3. QUADRENNIAL PERIODIC REPORT OF THE 2005 UNESCO CONVENTION

For the current year, Timor-Leste successfully finalized the Quadrennial Periodic Report (QPR) regarding the 2005 UNESCO convention for the first time since the country ratified the convention on 2016. This periodic report concerns the overall progress in the field of expression of cultural diversification which is being implement by the Timor-Leste government through inter-ministerial cooperation. The consultation process of the QPR was a collaborative one, mainly between the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture (SSAC), the State Secretary for Social Communication (SECOMS), and the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO (TLNCU), implemented through various stages and involving a wide range of stakeholders.

The data collection process was the most difficult part during the consultation process. The team faced several constraints in this process related to accessing information from government and civil society organizations. It was not easy to obtain access compared to other countries in which the majority of data is available online.

5.4. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

5.4.1. MEMORY OF THE WORLD (MOW)

The context of the MoW is a highlighting of the importance of conservation and safeguarding documents and audio-visual materials in Timor-Leste. The process is still ongoing and in the strategy for next year (2021) the committee members are focused on the preparation and identification of several selected archives that would be considered for future nomination. However, the global pandemic of COVID-19 has been the main challenge in which inconsistency of meeting schedules and the lack of participation of committee members has had an impact during the project timeline period. Meanwhile, limited online facilitation and the poor internet network have been barriers for project implementation. In addition, lack of funds and inconsistent budgets have been barriers to running this activity.

6. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF JOINT PROJECT PROPOSALS

The following describes future programmes and activities for future joint projects proposed by the National Commission in the fields of Education, Science, Culture, and Communication and Information:

6.1. EDUCATION

6.1.1. BRIDGE TIMOR-LESTE (CLC PROJECT)

The main objectives of the CLC project are as follows. First, to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs and the Education 2030 agenda through non-formal education on the sub-regional level. Second, to improve the quality of life of marginalized groups and communities through the promotion of non-formal education at both the community and national and regional level. And third, to achieve SDG 4 through an enhanced non-formal education liaison with the Incheon Declaration. This will be a milestone and lead to great opportunities in the learning process among national commissions in the Southeast Asia region in the effort to obtain inclusive education.

6.1.2. ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS NETWORK PROJECT (ASPNET)

ASPnet aims to promote quality education in pursuit of peace and sustainable development on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) focused on peace and human rights, intercultural understanding, citizenship education, respect for diversity, tolerance, inclusiveness, climate change, biodiversity, reduction of disaster risk and sustainable consumption at the sub-regional level. The context is to experiment with and integrate GCED and ESD into the teaching and learning processes of ASPnet schools, as well as to strengthen information sharing on best practices of ASPnet schools for the teachers, parents of students and communities as a whole.

6.1.3. JOINT PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR ICH EDUCATION

The joint project proposal for ICH education would highlight the inclusion and transmission of ICH into the education system with goal of youth that are well educated, knowledgeable and with a better understanding of ICH education for sustainable development, specifically for underdeveloped countries at a regional level. This joint project proposal would be very significant and a great opportunity within the National Commission to share experiences on how to pursue the inclusion of ICH education into the learning system, including its challenges. This project could be important for underdeveloped countries in Southeast Asia countries, and specifically for Timor-Leste.

The main context of the project concerns the integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) into the education curriculum and its framework which could be applied in both a formal and non-formal manner. This is most important in that, in order to conserve local knowledge in the long term, the culture should synchronize with education as sustainable way of transmitting ICH. On the other hand, the exchange of both teachers and students among the beneficiary schools in the Southeast Asia region is very important for learning experiences to tackle future challenges which aim to meet common needs in the field of ICH education.

6.2. SCIENCE

6.2.1. ONLINE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The context of the project is to provide training for teachers and students on applying online learning methods for schools in Southeast Asian countries and at the regional level. The global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the education and learning system in general and represents a challenge in the implementation of online learning methods. A majority of teachers and students, specifically those living in remote areas, have a limited knowledge of adopting online learning methods and these barriers impact the effectiveness of the learning process. Capacity building for teacher training and for students is very important in the usage of online platforms to respond to the current global pandemic. The joint project proposal as a joint effort on how to improve the education system through adoption of online learning experiences is expected to respond to common needs in the field of education.

6.3. CULTURE

6.3.1. TRADITIONAL HANDCRAFT WEAVING TRAINING (ICH)

The joint project proposal on handcraft weaving training would be very significant for the transmission of local knowledge for future generations in liaison with the 2003 UNESCO Cultural Convention. The youth, including local communities and students, are the main targets for this joint project proposal. As one knows, traditional handcrafts exist in each country (Hansanmosi in Korea, Tais in Timor-Leste, Batik in Indonesia, etc.), but each year shows a dramatic decrease in the number of practitioners, which could endanger the existence of both material and immaterial heritages. This joint project proposal could be most significant as a learning process with other National Commissions (countries) to synchronize on the effort to conserve, safeguard and transmit local knowledge in a sustainable manner.

6.3.2. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The context of this project is to preserve and promote indigenous traditional history. The project would direct involvement of indigenous language speakers on the development process. Regarding the implementation method, communities (elders) would be the main target of the data collection process. The project outcome would be transmitted through various publications and advocated for in the region. Meanwhile, students would be the main pillar in the transmission process and the publication could be running on the occasion of the commemoration of International Indigenous Languages Day. The main context of the project is to conserve indigenous local history as one of the cultural components that should be preserved.

6.4. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

6.4.1. MEMORY OF THE WORLD (MOW)

This is a joint MoW project which aims for a joint registration along with other countries on the effort to nominate and conserve document archives throughout the region. Its importance is found in the challenge in which each country carries out the registration process differently. For many years, there has been an increasing risk of losing valuable information that attests to the knowledge of the world, as well as the identity, history and values of different peoples. This joint project proposal aims to increase the awareness of intergovernmental concerned institutions and the general public on the importance of preserving documentary heritage, which has worldwide significance as a property to all. Much significant documentary heritage, which embodies the memory of local communities as well as that of humanity, has been dispersed and damaged because of inevitable natural disasters, as well as from conflicts specifically in countries that have an enduring post-conflict background.

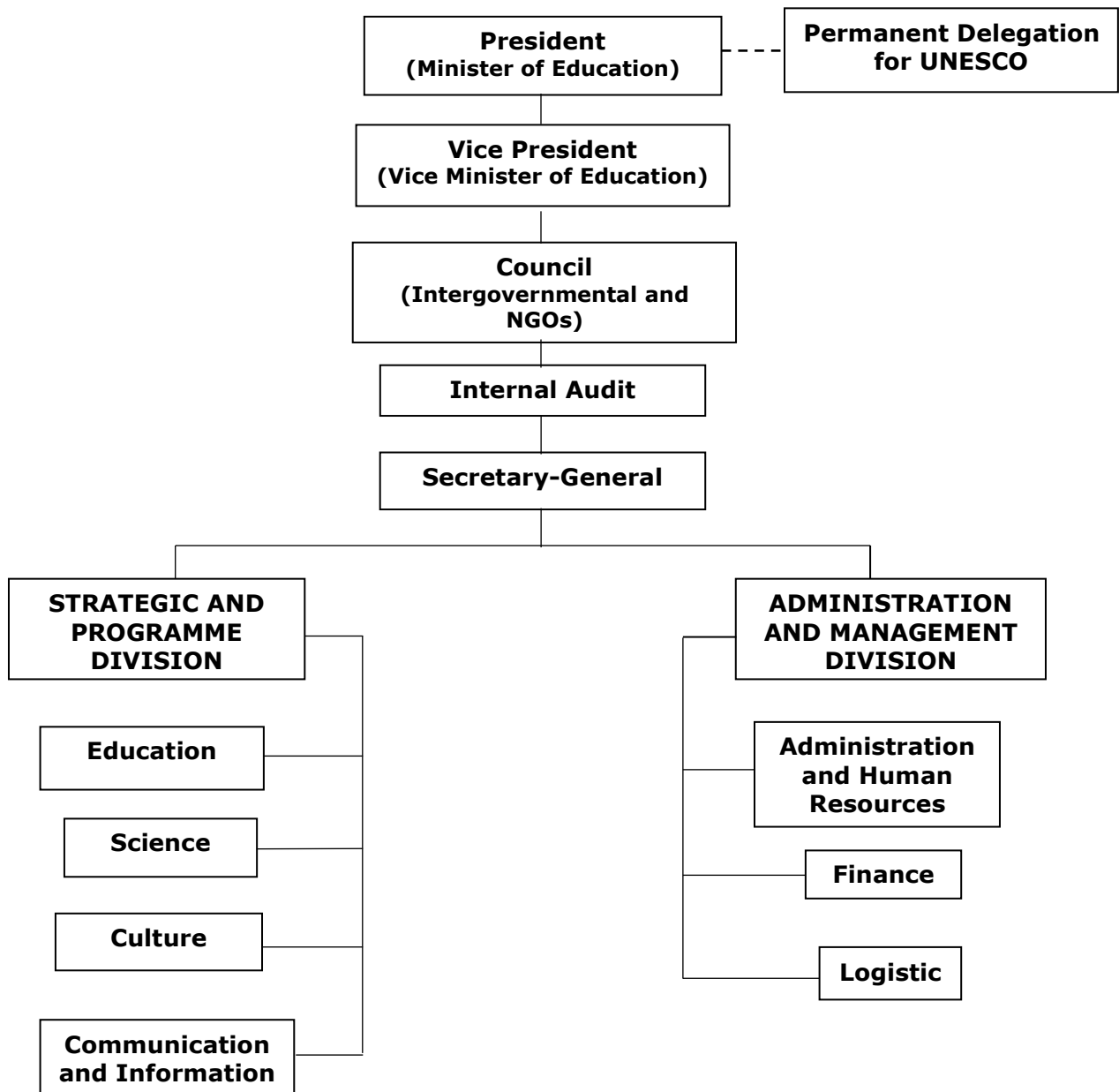
6.4.2. DIGITALIZATION OF THE ICH PROJECT

The documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is of crucial importance

for its effective safeguarding. These materials allow us to understand the changes in traditional expressions, practices and skills over time, recording the constantly evolving character of our cultures and of ICH. The objective of this proposal is to encourage national commissions and the Asia-Pacific Region to digitize the analogue materials such as magnetic tapes and reels recording ICH with a view to enhancing their preservation and accessibility for effective ICH safeguarding. Despite their value as sources of the ICH in the past, some of them have become inaccessible due to natural decay, poor storage environment, and rapid technological changes. In addition, in relation with the process of advocacy and transmission for the future, there is a need for a capacity building programme for youth to learn about the importance of digitalization. The main target could be students from various universities to expand the notion of conservation as a national asset.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: TLNCU organizational structure (2020)



Appendix 2: TLNCU staff numbers

Division	Subdivision	No. staff
Strategic and Programme Division	Education	1
	Science	6
	Culture	6
	Communication and Information	1
Administration and Management Division	Administration and Human Resources	2
	Finance	3
	Logistic	4
Total		23

Appendix 3: TLNCU Secretary-General and period of mandate

Years (mandate)	Name	Position
2009 - 2010	Ms. Kirsty Sword Gusmão	Chairperson
2010 - 2013	Ms. Jacinta Barreto	Secretary-General
2014 - 2017	Ms. Angelina Sarmento	
2017 - 2019	Ms. Cedelizia Faria dos Santos	
2019 - 2020	Mr. Francisco Barreto	

Appendix 4: Details of TLNCU financial sources, from 2016 – 2020

Fiscal Year	Activities	Approved Budget		Donors
		International Funds	State party	
2016	Development of student workbooks, teacher training and school visits for 3rd cycle math and science curriculum (7th to 9th grade)	\$ 402,115.00		UNESCO-Jakarta
	Green Schools	\$ 13,812.00		UNESCO-Jakarta
	Preservation and Development of traditional houses of Marobo & Oecusse, including annual promotion	\$ 23,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Trainer training for MTB-MLE staff	\$ 25,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Male engagement to reduce violence against women	\$ 26,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Pilot for district-based science/mathematics centers	\$ 25,800.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Inquiry-based Science and Mathematics teaching for pre-service teachers	\$ 25,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Operational funds for the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO		\$ 300,000.00	Ministry of Education
	Mother tongue-based education pilot program		\$ 224,262.00	Ministry of Education
Subtotal		\$ 540,727.00	\$ 524,262.00	\$ 1,064,989.00
2017	Operational funds for the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO		\$ 264,868.50	Ministry of Education
	World Science day event	\$ 35,000.00		Conoco Phillips
	Uma America	\$ 13,151.30		USA Embassy
	Mother tongue-based education pilot program		\$ 153,911.70	Ministry Education
	Teacher training, teacher mentoring and student assessment		\$ 183,774.00	UNESCO-Jakarta
Subtotal		48151.3	\$ 602,554.20	\$ 650,705.50
2018	Operational funds for the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO		\$ 218,700.00	Ministry of Education
	Mother tongue-based education pilot program	\$ 40,014.80		Australian Embassy
	World Science Day event	\$ 35,000.00		Conoco Phillips
	STEM for girls and EHPA activities	\$ 20,013.20		USA Embassy
	Research projects of cultural heritage	\$ 22,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Study and exchange visit for coordinators to California	\$ 15,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Promoting STEM for girls in the districts of Timor-Leste	\$ 18,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Workshop on writing traditional stories for early grade reading in 5 languages and comparative study in Philippines	\$ 20,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Timor-Leste Memory of the World and annual promotion of UNESCO	\$ 18,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Expansion of Koha system from Dili to districts	\$ 18,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Associated school project network (ASPNET) in Timor-Leste	\$ 18,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
Subtotal		\$ 224,028.00	\$ 218,700.00	\$ 442,728.00

2019	World Science Day event	\$ 35,000.00		Conoco Philips
	Action oriented teacher guidebook for tourism vocation education for sustainable development in Timor-Leste	\$ 20,000.00		UNESCO-Jakarta
	International assistance for preparing a nomination for inscription on the urgent safeguarding list	\$ 10,000.00		UNESCO-Paris
	Operational funds for the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO		\$ 180,000.00	Ministry of higher education science and culture
Subtotal		\$ 65,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 245,000.00
2020	Preparation of national quarterly periodic report	\$ 10,000.00		UNESCO-Jakarta
	Strengthening science and mathematics primary education in Timor-Leste	\$ 476,008.00		UNESCO-Jakarta
Subtotal		\$ 486,008.00		\$ 486,008.00
TOTAL		\$ 1,363,914.30	\$ 1,525,516.20	\$ 2,889,430.50

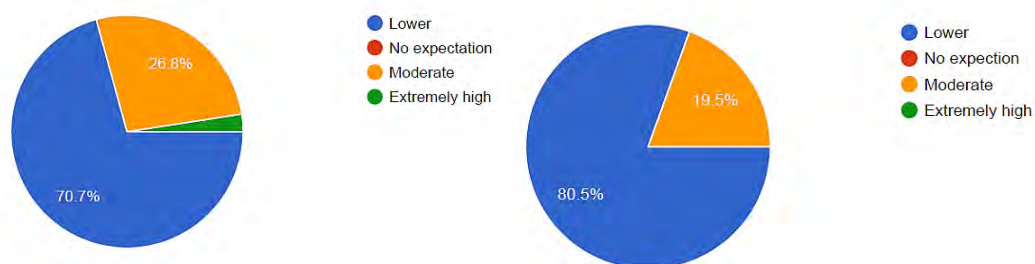
Appendix 5: Structure of Timor-Leste National Committee for ICH

Category	Institutions		Structure
Government & Semi Government	SSAC	Secretary of State for Arts and Culture	President and Secretariat
	TLNCU	Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO	Vice President II
	SEII	Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion	Vice President II
	MTCI	Ministry of Tourism, Commerce & Industry	Member
Local NGOs	Fundasaun Alola	Alola Foundation	Member
	Timor Aid	Timor Aid	Member
International Agency	UNESCO	UNESCO Dili Antenna Office	Observers
	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	
	USAID's Tourism For All Project	USAID's Tourism For All Project	

Appendix 6: Study areas and number of targeted schools

Type of School	Dili municipality (district capital)						
	Subdistricts						
	Atauro	Becora	Comoro	Dili	Hera	Metinaro	Total
Pre-Secondary School	3	3	1	4	1	1	13
Secondary School	2	8	4	11	1	2	28
Total	5	11	5	15	2	3	41

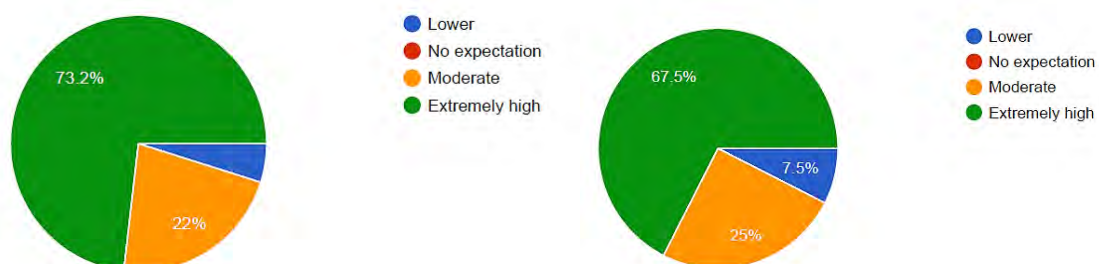
Appendix 7: Level of knowledge of teachers and students on ICH



Left: knowledge (level awareness) of teachers in the field of ICH.

Right: knowledge (level awareness) of students in the field of ICH

Appendix 8: Importance of integration of ICH education



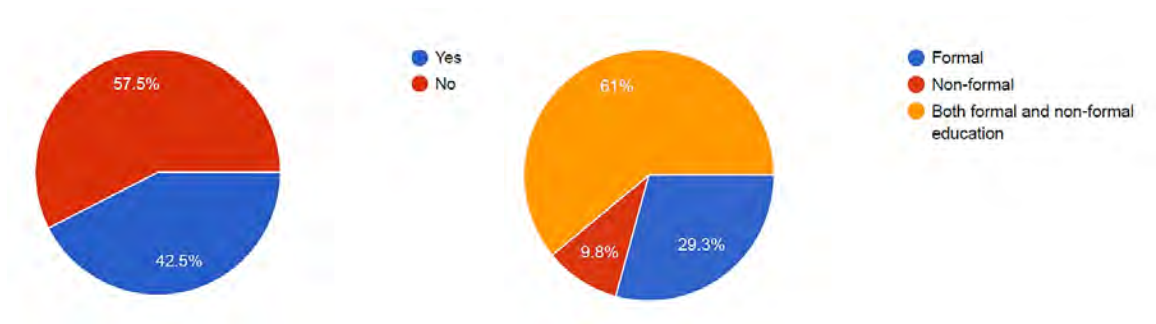
Left: Expectation level on implementation of ICH education in terms of significance for students

Right: Level of importance of the integration of ICH education into the learning process.

Appendix 9: Priority potential ICH related subjects

Indigenous knowledge	Culture event	Tradition
Gastronomy (traditional food)	Ritual	Traditional diving and fishing
Traditional music	Dance	Traditional farming
Traditional handcraft (weaving, natural dying, chisel work, etc.)	Performance (culture performance)	Traditional history
Making traditional boats		
Traditional medicine		

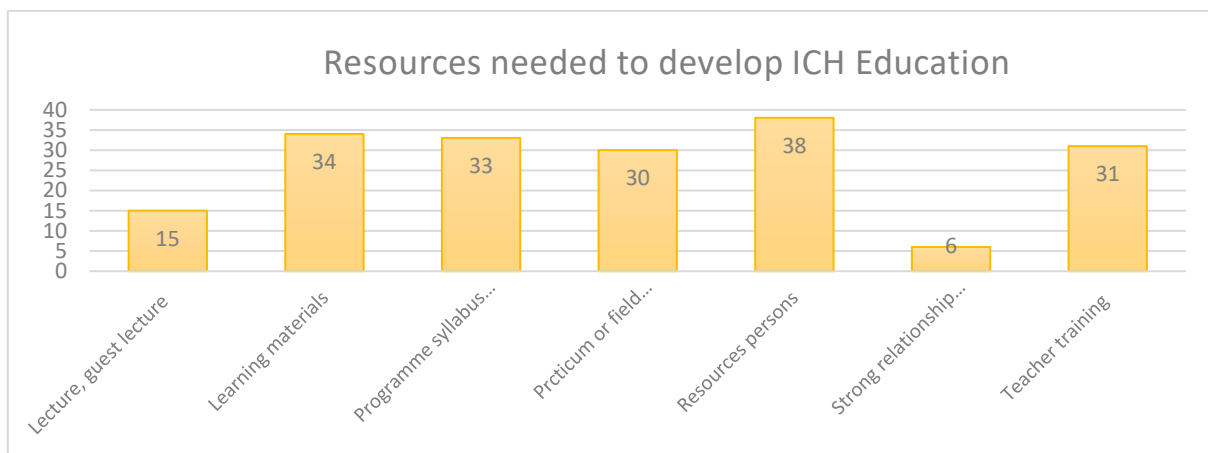
Appendix 10: ICH education adoption model



Left: Subject or modules offered by school.

Right: Integration of ICH model adopted into education system

Appendix 11: Resources needed for development of ICH education



ANNEXES (RELATED PICTURES)

Annex 1 - Pictures related to Chapter 4: Past (activities implemented by TLNCU)



Left : Former Secretary Executive and Social Science Coordinator of TLNCU in audience with former Minister of Social Solidarity of Timor-Leste, H.E. Ms. Isabel Amaral Guterres (Source: TLNCU media, 27 April 2016).

Right: Hands-on training of physics, chemistry and biology (Source: TLNCU media, 2013)



Left: Seminar of data validation in Lospalos sub district (Source: TLNCU media, 19 December 2019).

Right: Extraordinary meeting of Timor-Leste ICH committee, in discussion on safeguarding plan activities (Source: TLNCU media, 29 January 2019).

Annex 2-Pictures related to the data collection process



Interview with TLNCU Secretary-General. Left: Former Secretary-General Ms. Jacinta Barreto. Right: Mr. Francisco Barreto, current Secretary-General (Source; TLNCU media, 24 August 2020).

Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO

Mr. Cung Duc Han



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

VIET NAM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

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FOREWORD

I highly appreciate the Korean National Commission for UNESCO's Joint Project initiative and identifying common challenges in the region. This is a very meaningful joint project in the region over the past 10 years, allowing the National Commissions for UNESCO of 10 countries in general and for Viet Nam in particular to introduce the process of establishment and development, and at the same time share experiences, organizational models and effective operation of the National Commissions.

We are located in a fast-growing and dynamic region, with rapid economic growth and a growing population. Therefore, the National Commission for UNESCO in each country has many opportunities to play an active role of becoming a bridge to help UNESCO enhance its visibility through the effective implementation of programs and ideas in the five fields of education, culture, natural sciences, social sciences, and communication and information. Moreover, the National Commission will identify difficulties, challenges and propose solutions for UNESCO and member countries to make appropriate adjustments in the process of policy making and implementation.

I hope that this project will develop into a typical and effective regional cooperation model within UNESCO, and that after this project, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO and other National Commissions will have the opportunity to participate in follow-up projects to strengthen cooperation in the region.

Phan Dung MAI
Secretary-General
Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO

PROFILE OF THE VIET NAM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

1. Organizational Structure

The Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO consists of a Secretariat and 5 Sub-Committees:

- Secretariat (under the Viet Nam Ministry of Foreign Affairs);
- Education Subcommittee (under the Ministry of Education and Training);
- Culture Subcommittee (under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism);
- Natural Science Subcommittee (under the Ministry of Science and Technology);
- Social Sciences Subcommittee (under the Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences);
- Information Subcommittee (under the Ministry of Information and Communication);

The current leadership of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO includes:

- President: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- Vice Chairmen: Vice Ministers of Education and Training; Culture, Sports and Tourism; Communication and Information; Science and Technology
- Members: Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment; Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; Vice Chairman of Viet Nam Academy of Science and Technology; Deputy Director-General of Viet Nam News Agency and Secretary of Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union.
- Secretariat: Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and Secretariat.

In addition, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO also has a network of professional committees and national focal points on specific issues such as:

- National Committees on: Memory of the World (MoW) Programme; International Hydrological Programme (IHP); Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC); International Geoscience Programme

(IGCP); Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB); Global Geoparks etc.

- UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) in Viet Nam
- World natural and cultural heritage sites
- World Biosphere Reserves
- Global Geoparks

Finally, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO manages the activities of the Viet Nam Federation of UNESCO Associations.

2. Legal status and functions

The Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO was established under Decision No. 251 / TTg of the Prime Minister dated 15 June 1977 and strengthened according to Decision 194 /QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister dated 30 January 2011. On 14 February 2012, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO issued Decision No. 59/QĐ-UBQGUNESCO on the promulgation of the Operation Regulation of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO.

As an inter-ministerial entity and a national focal point in the relationship between Viet Nam and UNESCO, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO has the following main functions and tasks:

- Submit to the Prime Minister to decide on Viet Nam's directions, policies, programs and work plans in the framework of cooperation with UNESCO.
- Assist the Prime Minister:
 - To monitor, urge and inspect the implementation of work plans and programs of concerned ministries, branches and localities and the Viet Nam Federation of UNESCO Associations in cooperation with UNESCO.
 - Coordinate the activities of relevant ministries, branches and localities in all the fields of UNESCO.
- Represent Viet Nam in relations with UNESCO, regional UNESCO Offices and UNESCO member states on UNESCO-related matters.
- Report annually to the Prime Minister on the organization and operation of the Commission and its cooperation activities with UNESCO in accordance

with the law and regulations.

3. Budget structure

- The Committee's budget is guaranteed by the state budget and is included in the annual estimated budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The operating budget of the subcommittees and technical sub-committees is guaranteed by the state budget and allocated a separate amount in the annual estimated budget of the line agencies.

1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Viet Nam appreciates the initiative of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. This has been a very good and meaningful joint project in the region over the past 10 years, allowing the National Commissions for UNESCO of member states to introduce the process of formation and development, and to share operational experiences, advantages as well as disadvantages, and especially valuable lessons to enhance the role of the National Commission in all the fields of UNESCO. In addition, this is also an opportunity for countries to jointly identify common challenges in the region, and then propose solutions to UNESCO.

Research methodology

- Collect all historical documents and annual reports of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO
- Interview former members of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO
- Discuss with Sub-Committees of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO

2. PAST: CHRONOLOGY OF THE VIET NAM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

It has been 30 years Viet Nam had taken one of the key steps in its integration process, which was the announcement of its membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in July 1976. The succession to UNESCO stems from the aspirations for peace of the Vietnamese people and demonstrates Viet Nam's commitment to enhance international cooperation in the fields of science, education and culture. Over the past 40 years, the Viet Nam - UNESCO cooperation relationship has contributed significantly to the development of Viet Nam.

THE PERIOD OF 1976-1986: INITIAL STEPS

Right after the country was completely unified, Viet Nam entered one of the most difficult times in many aspects. In the international arena, Viet Nam had been beset with embargoes and isolation. Inside the country, the war of more than 30 years had left heavy consequences with exhausted human resources, devastated infrastructure, an underdeveloped economy and many existing social problems.

Viet Nam-UNESCO relations during this period contributed to helping Viet Nam overcome many of the above difficulties. Through its active participation in UNESCO programs, the international community has come to better understand the peaceful and beautiful country of Viet Nam. The 21st General Assembly of UNESCO, in 1980, issued a Resolution commemorating the 600th anniversary of the birth of Nguyen Trai, a Great Poet and Great Man of Culture, affirming Viet Nam's long-standing tradition and history. The successes in illiteracy eradication have shown to the world that Viet Nam, despite being in a difficult situation, is still interested in education and improving the quality of life of the population. **As a result, sympathy for Viet Nam in the majority of UNESCO's member states has increased continuously and into many other multilateral forums.** Viet Nam was elected as member of the UNESCO Executive Board (1978-1983) and set up a representative office at UNESCO (1982). In 1981, Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, visited Viet Nam.

Along with bringing a better understanding of Viet Nam to international friends, the partnership with UNESCO also gave Viet Nam more opportunities to access knowledge, experience and international financial and technical support to serve the reconstruction of the country. Known as the Intellectual Organization and the **best intergovernmental "laboratory of ideas" in the United Nations, UNESCO's support has actively contributed to the recovery of a number of Viet Nam's educational, scientific and cultural institutions.** Through the UNESCO programs, many Vietnamese scientists and professional staff had the opportunity for training, capacity building and access to international progress. In addition, Viet Nam also received much external technical equipment, despite its isolation. The above support contributed to help Viet Nam quickly overcome the initial

difficulties of the post-war period to enter a new period of development.

THE PERIOD OF 1986-2000: COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

The international situation changed during this period when peace and stability become the mainstream and spread worldwide. The role of multilateral organizations within the United Nations system increased. Viet Nam was determined to renew its economic management mechanism, open the market, and combine its national strength with the power of the era to serve the cause of building and defending the country.

In the process of renewal, the relationship between Viet Nam and UNESCO constantly developed and became more durable. In 1987, Viet Nam ratified the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. One year later, Viet Nam participated in the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) launched by UNESCO. In 1992, Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Federico Mayor, visited Viet Nam. In 1999, UNESCO opened a representative office in Viet Nam. Viet Nam also hosted another visit of UNESCO Director-General during this period, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura (in 2000).

Through the above activities, Viet Nam continues to improve the understanding of the national traditions, the heroic history and the image of the country with many human values, actively supporting ideas of peace towards the international community. In 1987, UNESCO issued Resolution 24C/18.65 commemorating the centenary of the birth of President Ho Chi Minh - a Vietnamese hero of National Liberation and a Great Man of Culture, saying that " President Ho Chi Minh, an outstanding symbol of national affirmation, devoted his whole life to the national liberation of the Vietnamese people, contributing to the common struggle of **peoples for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress... His** ideals embody the aspirations of peoples in the affirmation of their cultural identities and the promotion of mutual understanding.

Viet Nam's World Cultural and Natural Heritages recognized by UNESCO include the Complex of Hué Monuments (1993), Ha Long Bay (1994), Hoi An Ancient

Town and My Son Sanctuary (1999), and the title of "City for Peace" for Hanoi (1999) contributed to enhancing the above value. Many relationships between Viet Nam and important partners stem from activities in UNESCO and the sympathy of international friends in becoming official long-term relations.

It is also thanks to its relationship with UNESCO that Viet Nam continues to receive important and strategic support for sustainable development, not in the sense of being a financial provider, but through UNESCO's ideas and experiences that contribute to changing perceptions and thinking to use resources most effectively. One of the typical cases is the change in perception and theory as well as the cultural undertakings and policies of Viet Nam after joining the "World Decade for Cultural Development". This brings a new awareness of the importance of building a comprehensive, unified culture in diversity, deeply imbued with a humanistic spirit, democracy and progress, thereby reviving the national culture and increasing exchanges with other countries.

The above awareness has also become a reference for the formation of the policy of **"Building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity."** In addition, many other programs and projects in this period that Viet Nam ran in collaboration with UNESCO such as Education for All, Community Learning Center Models, Biosphere Reserves, Training Centers, computer applications, etc. contributed significantly in improving the level of management as well as human resource development in Viet Nam, making them a sustainable factor of development.

THE PERIOD OF 2001-2019: INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION

The first decade of the twenty-first century marked many new steps in the integration process of Viet Nam. In 2001, Viet Nam determined to proactively integrate into the regional and international economy. At the international level, Viet Nam strengthened comprehensive cooperation with many partners such as the signing of the Bilateral Trade Agreement with the United States (2000), the Framework Agreement on ASEAN-China Economic Cooperation (2002), and becoming a member of the World Trade Organization, or WTO (2006). Viet Nam

has actively assumed important positions at a number of international organizations such as: Non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (2008-2009), and Chairmanship of ASEAN (2010). UNESCO was one of the important factors in this process.

To actively integrate in UNESCO, Viet Nam has implemented many activities such as ratifying a number of major conventions (Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005, etc.) or hosting many important UNESCO conferences and activities. In addition, Viet Nam promoted its own initiatives in specialized fields, such as: Literacy eradication, Community Learning Centers, and application of Education for Sustainable Development at the Biosphere Reserves. These experiences are highly appreciated by the world, and some foreign expert groups have come to Viet Nam to learn from its experiences.

The above activities have shown to the world a Viet Nam ready to connect and share its interests, goals and values, and to comply with common international regulations. Viet Nam has been elected to the UNESCO Executive Board for the term 2001-2005, with the highlight of being a Vice President (2001-2003) and continuing to be elected to the same body for the 2009-2013 term. For UNESCO, Viet Nam is considered to be an active partner. The two Directors-General visited Viet Nam in 2005 (Mr. Koichiro Matsuura) in 2010, 2013 and 2017 (Ms. Irina Bokova) with many long-term strategic cooperation agreements for the development of the bilateral relationship.

The cooperative relationship with UNESCO during this period contributed to the sustainability of Viet Nam's steps. Over the past 40 years, UNESCO has recognized 2 natural heritages, 1 mixed natural and cultural heritage, 5 cultural heritages, 13 intangible heritages, 7 documentary heritages, 9 biosphere reserves, and 3 global geoparks.

These heritages not only create local tourism revenue, but also impose a requirement on all levels of management and people to be aware of conservation

according to international criteria and regulations. Since then, many national and local development policies on conservation have been issued. Many activities to protect the heritage are carried out. Not only in the cultural field, but many other programs such as Education for Sustainable Development, Illiteracy, Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), International Hydrological Programme (IHP), Management of Social Transformations (MOST), and philosophical dialogue have brought the above specialized fields of Viet Nam into the world, directly serving the cause of national construction and defense.

In 2016, Cultural Diplomacy has been identified as one of the three pillars of Vietnamese diplomacy (together with Political Diplomacy and Economic Diplomacy) in which UNESCO is one of its important partners. However, international conditions for this period required Viet Nam to be more proactive in the process of cooperation with UNESCO.

Unlike before, when participation was mostly passive and relied on available resources, Viet Nam was ready to take on many new important roles such as membership of the World Heritage Committee, membership on the UNESCO Executive Board and many other positions to contribute more effectively to UNESCO as well as to ensure its national interests.

Viet Nam has played a proactive role by successfully assuming some key positions at UNESCO's professional committees such as the Vice President of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (2014-2018, 2018-2022); Vice President of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC), member of the Advisory Committee of the Intergovernmental Panel on the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; and member of the Advisory Board of the Global Geoparks Network and the Asia Pacific Geoparks Network.

Viet Nam has actively hosted important international conferences such as the 7th Plenary Meeting of the Memory of the World Programme Committee in Asia-Pacific in May 2016 in Hue city. In addition, Viet Nam is actively implementing

the Memorandum of Understanding between Viet Nam and UNESCO in all the fields for the term of 2016-2020, signed on the occasion of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's visit to UNESCO in February 2015.

3. PRESENT: MAIN PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE VIET NAM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

EDUCATION

The Education Sub-Committee has stepped up cooperation with UNESCO on many specific activities to implement the policy of fundamental and comprehensive reform of education in Viet Nam towards modernization, regional and international integration, and towards building a learning, inclusive, creative and sustainable society.

A prominent event in the cooperation between Viet Nam and UNESCO is the successful organization of the 4th UNESCO Forum on Education for Sustainable **Development and Global Citizenship** ("Learning and teaching from kindergarten to primary and secondary schools for peace and a sustainable society") held in Hanoi from July 2 to 3, 2019. The forum attracted the participation of 350 delegates including educational managers, scholars, and education experts from more than 100 countries and international organizations to attend and exchange research. The forum has the effect of promoting and raising awareness about sustainable development education and global citizenship in Viet Nam.

Viet Nam and UNESCO also jointly organized the international "Planning for Education Development Strategy" workshop to collect ideas on building Viet Nam's education strategy associated with the trend of sustainable development. The Education Sub-Committee, UNESCO Office and the Secretariat of the National Commission are continuing to promote this important project to develop a set of educational indicators for Viet Nam according to international standards, contributing to advise and propose policies more effectively for education and training at all levels and for the strategic planning of education development in

Viet Nam.

The cooperation with UNESCO in the field of education last year is reflected in the continued implementation of the commitments mentioned in the Viet Nam - UNESCO Memorandum for the period of 2016-2020. The two sides coordinate to mobilize and implement many projects mobilized from UNESCO funds such as the **Girls' Education Project with a budget of 500,000 USD, and a Global Partnership Fund** to support education planning for Viet Nam with a budget of 500,000 USD.

Recently, the Japanese Ministry of Education sponsored a project on ASPnet scheduled for September 2020. The project will be implemented in Japan, Thailand and Viet Nam to study the interaction between pupils and students of other countries. Each country will introduce two ASPnet schools to participate in this project.

CULTURE

Viet Nam actively participates in and contributes to the General Assembly Sessions, Intergovernmental Committees of the 2003 Conventions on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism continues to uphold its role and responsibility in handling and advising on state management policies and legal documents in the implementation of the Convention: completing two circulars stipulating in detail a number of regulations on preservation and restoration of monuments and a circular stipulating the cost of planning, project, economic-technical reports, construction drawing design and preservation, restoration of historical-cultural relics, and scenic places; Guide localities to submit to the Prime Minister for approval of master planning of the World Heritage of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park in the period of 2019-2025, Vision 2035, to comment on the project of developing and promoting the value of world cultural heritages in Hoi An Ancient Town, etc.

The work of researching and building up documents to submit to UNESCO for recognition of new titles continues to generate interest and includes: Ba Be - Na Hang Natural Heritage Area, Oc Eo Cultural Relic, Halong Bay - Cat Ba expansion; completing and submitting to UNESCO the records of Xoe Thai Art, Traditional Pottery Art of the Cham and the records of Dong Ho folk paintings.

To ensure a balance between conservation and development, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO has carried out many activities to raise awareness and coordinate the implementation of heritage conservation such as: A workshop on "Role of the National Commission for UNESCO in preserving and promoting the value of natural and cultural heritages for sustainable development" **in Ninh Binh province (November 2019); a workshop on "Reducing risks of natural disasters with cultural heritage" for July 10-12, 2019, at UNESCO Hanoi Office;** and a workshop on the Visitor Management Assessment Toolkit and its application in tourism management planning and value protection heritage. At the same time, localities organized many important activities such as the 20th Anniversary of the City for Peace Prize, 20 years of Hoi An and My Son World Cultural Heritage, and 10 years of cultural heritage. The intangible heritages of Ca Tru and Quan Ho honored and raised awareness of the community in the conservation and promotion of heritage values in Viet Nam.

This year, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO will coordinate with the city of Ha Noi to hold the 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of UNESCO and the 10-year anniversary of the Imperial City of Thang Long – Ha Noi recognized as a World Cultural Heritage, including exhibitions on the preservation of the Thang Long heritage – Ha Noi and Hoi An Ancient Town, international seminars and celebrations. In addition, a series of promotional activities for the city of Ha Noi are expected to be carried out from now to the end of next year after Ha Noi joins the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in October 2019. Specifically, on September 23, the signing ceremony of a framework agreement between SOVICO Holdings and three United Nations agencies (UN-Habitat, UNIDO, UNESCO) was carried out to support activities of Ha Noi City; on September 28, there were a Workshop on **Cultural Resources on the "Creative City of Ha Noi Capital" Development Strategy** and on October 2, 2020, a high-level seminar on **"Consultation on initiatives: Ha**

Noi - The creative city”.

NATURAL SCIENCE

The National Commission supports the tasks of science and technology at the national level for conservation and sustainable development research for the subcommittees of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Geoparks, Man and the Biosphere and the expansion support for other titles such as Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park Natural Heritage, and supports local scientific research to develop new records to submit to UNESCO.

Efforts were achieved in the field of oceanography in 2018, in which the National Commission for UNESCO continues to work with the UNESCO Hanoi Office and ministries and agencies to promote the development of a long-term cooperation framework in the field of maritime governance and marine spatial planning with the aim of strengthening institutions, enhancing the capacity of relevant agencies, promoting scientific research and policy making in these areas. Currently all parties are working to establish a trust fund to serve this task.

In addition, the three Global Geoparks recognized as Dong Van Karst Plateau, Non nuoc Cao Bang and Dak Nong continue to promote their value in attracting numerous tourists as well as implementing some initiatives to promote local heritage values, creating jobs for local communities.

Regarding the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, Viet Nam has actively participated in the ICC-MAB sessions in collaboration with the UNESCO Hanoi Office, Dong Nai World Biosphere Reserve and Cu Lao Cham world Biosphere Reserve, organized a workshop on promoting eco-labeling mechanisms and plastic waste reduction solutions for the network of world biosphere reserves in Viet Nam in the framework of funding from the Hanns Seidel Foundation (Germany) (October 2019). These activities both help to enhance the value of local products with world biosphere reserves and demonstrate Viet Nam's response to the world's environmental protection initiatives.

Regarding the development of basic science, in 2019, in response to the 150th anniversary of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements, the National Commission in collaboration with the University of Natural Sciences organized a contest to learn about the Periodic Table; two Category II Centers for Mathematics and Physics have strengthened the organizational structure (appointing a Director, establishing a Scientific Council and an Executive Board) to promulgate operating regulations to create a basis for completing legal documents, then to submit to the Prime Minister for adoption of a Resolution approving the Agreement with UNESCO.

This year, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO will submit to UNESCO the nomination documents for the Nui Chua Biosphere Reserve (Ninh Thuan Province), the Kon Ha Nung Biosphere Reserve (Gia Lai Province) and modification of the Non-Cao Bang Global Geopark.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

The Information Sub-Committee has performed well in the work of information, publicity and reporting on UNESCO activities, programs and projects and activities related to UNESCO in Viet Nam. Through the organization of the annual Meeting (30 June 2020) it provides information to the media and is considered to be the mechanism for periodic exchanges between press agencies and the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO, provides in-depth content on UNESCO conventions, activities and cooperation with UNESCO in the fields of education and science, brings together a network of more than 100 UNESCO journalists/editors from news agencies and regularly updates national and international information on UNESCO as well as provides press releases on the activities of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO through this network of reporters.

The Communication and Information Sub-Committee organized programs to introduce titles/heritages of Viet Nam **inscribed in UNESCO's lists during the visits** of foreign journalists (Laos, Cambodia, ASEAN, etc.) to Viet Nam in 2019; organized the display of the World Heritages of Viet Nam in a number of provinces in the country and abroad (Finland, the Netherlands, Cambodia, Myanmar, etc.);

produced 8 documentary films for television broadcasting and provided promotional DVDs on natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritages of Viet Nam inscribed in UNESCO's lists.

The capacity building for UNESCO officials, reporters and press has also been enhanced through the coordination of organizing fieldwork delegations, studying relics, cultural heritages and conservation work in Cao Bang province, while a training course was organized for journalists and press managers on "Writing skills on heritage" in Quang Ninh (May 2019).

SOCIAL SCIENCE

The National Commission for UNESCO has carried out research on some issues for UNESCO in the field of Social Sciences on the topics of "Development of a code of ethics related to artificial intelligence" and "management of social transformation."

COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH UNESCO OFFICE IN HA NOI

The cooperation between the National Commission for UNESCO and the UNESCO Office in Hanoi is close, effective and substantial in all fields of education, culture, science, and communication and information. The activities are closely linked to Viet Nam's development priorities. The two sides hold regular meetings (16 May 2020 and 9 September 2020) to share information and propose activities to implement the National Strategy for UNESCO in Viet Nam for the 2020-2021 period. In particular, the two sides pay special attention to advising the locality on heritage conservation, promotion, and organization of capacity training conferences. In addition, the two sides work together to actively seek financial resources for projects in Viet Nam and attend press conferences to promote UNESCO's image in Viet Nam.

CHALLENGES TO CURRENT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

- The budget allocated for the operation of the Secretariat and some agencies is limited.

- The system of legal documents related to the management, administration and development of UNESCO heritages in Viet Nam is incomplete and still has many shortcomings, from which the harmonious settlement of preservation and promotion of the value of the heritage types recognized by UNESCO in some localities have not been given adequate and regular attention.
- In some sub-committees, there is still a lack of a common focal point for coordination, causing a scattering of resources and limiting effectiveness of cooperation. Most of the staff are part-time employees who have to concurrently hold other jobs, and their professional qualifications, and knowledge of UNESCO and foreign languages in particular are still limited.

4. FUTURE: FUTURE PRIORITIES OF THE VIET NAM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

4.1. IDENTIFYING FUTURE COMMON CHALLENGES IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

CLIMATE CHANGE

Global climate change is a key issue of environmental security and has become the largest non-traditional security challenge that the region is facing. Global climate change has emerged as a challenging and potentially dangerous factor for the future survival of nations.

Climate change causes unfavorable changes in the environment, ecological crisis, and threatens human security and national security. The most obvious manifestations are global warming, melting ice, rising sea levels, and extreme weather phenomena such as storms and floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, droughts, and long-lasting disasters. These changes affect human lives, cause economic recession, conflict and war, reduce biodiversity, destroy the ecosystem, and lead to food shortages and epidemics.

Viet Nam is one of the countries most severely affected by climate change, of

which the Mekong Delta is one of the three most vulnerable deltas due to sea level rise. Viet Nam is also one of the countries that suffers from extreme weather patterns and is often affected by storms, tropical storms and tropical depressions.

Climate change has increased the severity of natural disasters, especially storms, floods, and droughts. It has led to displacement and migration in some of the severely affected areas. As land resources shrink due to rising sea levels, natural disasters such as tornadoes, floods, and droughts continue to take place at high intensity, and the number of displaced people increases, leading to temporary or permanent migration. This risk is particularly serious in the agricultural sector, severely affecting the poorest and most disadvantaged groups.

In Viet Nam, the scarcity and shortage of water resources due to dependence on transboundary rivers is the biggest challenge to water security, especially the Mekong and Red River, the two main rivers of Viet Nam. The impact of the exploitation and use of water resources of upstream countries can be seen in a shortage of water resources, saltwater intrusion, and landslides on both sides of the river, especially in the dry season.

EDUCATION FOR ALL

The epidemic of COVID-19 in the world is still complicated and unpredictable, while the negative impacts of the epidemic on all aspects of socio-economic life, especially in the education sector, continue to last. Epidemic outbreaks have risen again in many countries while governments have been unable to control them, leading to school closings.

Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused difficulties and damage to all aspects of education and training. Online learning is a must when students are unable to go to school. Concerns for quality aside, even viewing the situation only in terms of economics shows that online learning has increased the cost of education substantially.

Firstly, each morning, students wear masks, line up, and maintain a distance of one meter to measure their temperature before entering school. In class, students use their own thermometer to measure their temperature, report their parameters to the teacher, and then begin class. They play sports with limited contact such as badminton, table tennis, and volleyball.

Secondly, online students need to have the devices to make the experience possible such as computers, speakers, headsets with microphones, and printers. The online learning model is only feasible when the student's family economic conditions meet the requirements for learning facilities. But today, the vast majority of students are not well-off, including students in mountainous areas, for whom studying online is still not easy. As a result, many students have been stripped of their learning opportunities in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

POVERTY REDUCTION

The United Nations has just issued a warning about Southeast Asia, which stands on the brink of a socio-economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and **faces the risk of reversing decades of efforts to eradicate poverty: "The crisis threatens to destroy the livelihoods of 218 million informal workers in Southeast Asia. Without alternative income, formal social protection systems or savings to support this shock, workers and their families will be pushed into poverty."** Accordingly, the economy of the Southeast Asia region may decline by 0.4% in 2020, while the remittances of exported workers are expected to decrease by 13%, equivalent to USD 10 billion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had comprehensive and extensive effects all over the world. Currently, it continues to develop in a very complicated manner. The global economy has fallen into a serious recession. The large openness of the regional economies and extensive international integration have been affected seriously across all socio-economic sectors, causing disruption of supply chains and trade flows, delayed production, business and service activities; it has direct impacts on import, export, aviation, tourism, accommodation, catering, health,

education, labor and employment.

Many businesses in the region during this time face great difficulties because of the pandemic when there are no orders or a lack of raw materials for production. Many businesses go bankrupt, dissolve, suspend operations or downsize, and are forced to lay off workers or suspend jobs as a result. This situation is concentrated in a number of industries and trades such as garments, footwear, bags, e-commerce, and tourism, hotels and restaurants, transportation.

INFORMATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Misinformation about the COVID-19 epidemic is rampant all over the world. This is also something that scientists, medical professionals and social networking companies have yet to fully handle. Over time, untruthful information has appeared rampantly on social media, increasing fear, causing chaos and instability, and leading to extreme reactions.

Since the first COVID-19 infection was reported at the end of 2019, misinformation has appeared in increasing numbers and frequency on social networking sites, leading to a growing quantity of false information. The anti-epidemic campaign is becoming more and more difficult and complex. The consequences of these false rumors not only hinder the anti-epidemic work of medical organizations or cause social unrest, but also threaten the lives of users if they are followed.

Rumors, embellished and fake information fabricated in the mass media about the COVID-19 epidemic are also considered a dangerous "virus" for the community. With the current popularity of a connection to the internet, the impact of fake news becomes more serious because users can too easily access unofficial information sources. The fight against fake news is therefore not only applicable to governments, technology corporations and media, but also needs a hand from the community and people of all countries.

Concerning false information on social networks, there are two trends. The first

is a trend towards information that is knowledgeable but intentionally inflated, misrepresented, false, lacking verification, or unfounded to provoke and destabilize the social order. The second is one that makes use of lack of understanding, qualifications and skills, resulting in accidentally sharing and distributing false information for the purpose of getting likes and comments, which spreads fake news on a large scale and adversely affects everyone.

In fact, posting false information is a common situation today, and is done through social networking sites such as Facebook, Zalo and mass media channels. Everyone has the right to freedom of speech but is also responsible for giving accurate information and for their own statements. If an individual uses his or her freedom of expression to post false or untrue information and causes physical or mental damage to others, the error is determined to be intentional.

In the context of a world that is disturbed by many sources of information, it becomes even more important to work closely to ensure that important information can be spread to communities and to limit the toxicity of information. In addition, it is necessary to promote promotional materials for people to understand, not to share untested information, and to ensure safety for the people.

4.2. PROPOSAL FOR THE NEXT JOINT PROJECT IN THE REGION

UNESCO is the only organization in the UN system that has established a network of National Commissions. The National Commission for UNESCO in each country plays a very important role in connecting and effectively implementing activities, ideas and programs of UNESCO in the region in general and each country in particular.

In Viet Nam, the National Commission gathers a full range of ministries and branches in the five fields of education, culture, communication and information, natural sciences and social sciences. Moreover, the National Commission is indeed an important channel for conveying national proposals to UNESCO-related

areas under its jurisdiction towards the development of effective, fruitful and sustainable global strategies.

The Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO highly appreciates the project of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO because, in fact, not many such regional projects have been implemented.

Following this survey, the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO proposed the next joint project to establish a regional online communication platform for knowledge sharing among National Commissions in East and Southeast Asia. In the short term, in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it will allow us to quickly and promptly share information on the network. In the long term, we will maintain the network to promote cooperation, information activities and programs, and to share difficulties in the process of promoting and implementing activities to propose to UNESCO on common issues with which the region is concerned.

Joint Research Report on National Commissions for UNESCO in East and Southeast Asia

First published in November 2020 by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO

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Publisher Korean National Commission for UNESCO
Editors Sarah Jane KIM / David MacLeod / Hyunsook SEO / Yung Yun PAIK /
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KNCU Registration No. IR-2020-RR-1

ISBN: 9791190615051 (03300)

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