



Korean National Commission for UNESCO

UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, more commonly known as UNESCO, is a specialized agency of the UN founded in 1945. It aims to foster peace by promoting international cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, and communication & information. UNESCO serves as a laboratory of ideas for innovation and policy advice, sets international norms and standards, and helps Member States strengthen intellectual cooperation and knowledge sharing. As of September 2024, the Organization comprises 193 Members and 12 Associate Members. Uniquely among the UN specialized agencies, UNESCO has a network of National Commissions. These are national bodies in each Member State that function as coordinators between UNESCO and the government in the Member State, helping to promote UNESCO's ideals and programmes on the ground.

Foundation

16 November 1945 (the date that the UNESCO Constitution was signed)

Location

Paris, France

Functions

- Serving as a laboratory of ideas and generating innovative proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence
 - Developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking
 - Setting norms and standards in its fields of competence and supporting and monitoring their implementation
 - Strengthening international and regional cooperation in its fields of competence, and fostering alliances, intellectual cooperation, knowledge sharing, and operational partnerships
 - Providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities
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Member States

193 Members and 12 Associate Members



Korean National Commission for UNESCO

The Republic of Korea joined UNESCO in 1950, just 11 days before the start of the Korean War. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) was established nearly four years later, on January 30, 1954, shortly after the war. Despite the turbulence of the postwar period, South Korea saw the value of cultivating international exchanges and cooperation to fuel its reconstruction and development, and in 1963, its National Assembly passed the "Act on UNESCO Activities" to give a national legal basis to KNCU's work. For decades as South Korea developed, KNCU served as the conduit for much of the international aid and knowledge that flowed into the country in the fields of education, science, and culture. KNCU also incubated a number of key public institutions, such as today's Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), that later became powerful tools to help other economies grow, as South Korea moved from being a recipient of aid to being a donor country. Today, KNCU acts as a focal point for many UNESCO-related activities in South Korea. Headed by the Minister of Education, and made up of a 60-member General Assembly supported by a Secretariat, KNCU undertakes a wide range of activities in each of UNESCO's fields of competence. It is one of the largest National Commissions for UNESCO in the world and, in addition to its work within South Korea, takes a leading role in driving regional and global cooperation among National Commissions, as well as other members of the UNESCO family.

Foundation

30 January 1954

Location

Seoul, Republic of Korea

Legal Basis

UNESCO Constitution ^(Art. 7) and South Korea's Act on UNESCO Activities

Functions and Roles

- Ensuring that government departments, local authorities, other relevant organizations, and individuals participate actively in UNESCO activities.
 - Researching, reviewing and proposing policies and international agreements relating to UNESCO activities.
 - Reviewing and commenting on the agenda for meetings of UNESCO's governing bodies, and suggesting appropriate members for the delegations.
 - Making and reviewing proposals concerning the domestic implementation of UNESCO activities.
 - Cooperating with other organizations and institutions relevant to UNESCO activities to undertake and coordinate projects.
 - Generating funds for UNESCO activities (including through the management of the real estate asset of Korea UNESCO House)
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Adapting to Future Challenges

**Together,
we can create a better future
for humanity.**

Fostering Leaders for a Better Future

We identify and nurture emerging talent, fostering the insight and skills needed to lead the way to a better future. By bringing together experts from various fields, we aim to create a robust network of exceptional professionals equipped to drive positive change.

Anticipating Future Challenges and Proposing Solutions

We identify challenges that the Republic of Korea and the global community are likely to face in the future and develop effective strategies to address them. We conduct comprehensive research on a wide range of issues and publish regular 'Issue Briefs' that analyze current societal concerns and suggest ways forward to address such issues and promote sustainable development.

Disseminating Knowledge to Enhance Future Preparedness

We host 'UNESCO Talks' and international forums to enable a broader range of people to understand how the world is changing and contribute towards a better future for all. Through these initiatives, we promote active social discourse, learning, and collective action to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

Related Activities

- Research on discourse concerning the future, Issue Briefs
- Participation in the meetings of UNESCO's governing bodies
- UNESCO Talks
- UNESCO international/intergovernmental science programmes
- Open Science - network cooperation in scientific fields
- AI ethics and science & technology ethics
- Cooperation with other UNESCO National Commissions



Bridging Educational Gaps

**Together,
we can create a world where
everyone has access
to quality education.**

Charting the Course for Global Educational Development

The Korean National Commission for UNESCO works with the South Korean government to play a leading role in discussions on global educational development on the UNESCO stage. We critically assess South Korea's progress toward achieving the global education goal ^(Sustainable Development Goal 4) and develop strategies for enhanced implementation.

Promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education for All

Education for Sustainable Development ^(ESD) and Global Citizenship Education ^(GCED) are crucial for nurturing responsible global citizens. Through the UNESCO Associated Schools Network ^(UNESCO ASPnet), comprising approximately 480 schools nationwide, we ensure the dissemination of UNESCO's values, making this essential education accessible to everyone, regardless of region or socioeconomic status.

Expanding Educational Opportunities for the Underprivileged

We provide educational opportunities to marginalized communities in developing countries who are excluded from formal education as a result of economic, social, or cultural barriers. By supporting lifelong learning, out-of-school education policies, and educational initiatives in science and culture, we empower communities to build their own capacities to achieve sustainable development through education.

Related Activities

- Education 2030
- UNESCO ASPnet
- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED)
- UNESCO International Forum on the Futures of Education 2024
- UNESCO Bridge Programme



Resolving Social and Cultural Conflicts

**Together,
we can create a peaceful society
that embraces diversity.**

Facilitating Youth Dialogue for Peace

We bring together youth from South Korea and around the world to discuss the critical challenges facing humanity today, encouraging them to develop innovative solutions. Our global youth programmes aim to cultivate a new generation that values diversity and is poised to lead transformative change. In the long term, these initiatives also aim to support the integration of international students and immigrants into our society, contributing to the prevention of social and cultural conflicts.

Fostering Peace through International Teacher and Student Exchanges

We organize exchange programmes for teachers and students from the Republic of Korea and various other countries. These exchanges foster a broader understanding of global perspectives, helping to resolve and prevent social and cultural conflicts through education.

Promoting Global Peace through UNESCO Heritage

We champion heritage-focused dialogue among UNESCO Member States to ensure that cultural heritage serves as a catalyst for peace rather than conflict. Additionally, we develop and disseminate educational materials that highlight the diverse meanings and values that heritage contributes to our lives.

Related Activities

- Invitation Programme for Korean/Japanese Teachers
- UNESCO Memory of the World International Training Workshop
- UNESCO Heritage Education
- World Heritage
- Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Memory of the World
- Diversity of Cultural Expressions



List of Korean Heritage and Sites Designated by UNESCO

World Heritage

- Haeinsa Temple Janggyeong Panjeon, the Depositories for the Tripitaka Koreana Woodblocks (1995)
- Jongmyo Shrine (1995)
- Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple (1995)
- Changdeokgung Palace Complex (1997)
- Hwaseong Fortress (1997)
- Gochang, Hwasun and Ganghwa Dolmen Sites (2000)
- Gyeongju Historic Areas (2000)
- Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes (2007)
- Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty (2009)
- Historic Villages of Korea: Hahoe and Yangdong (2010)
- Namhansanseong (2014)
- Baekje Historic Areas (2015)
- Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (2018)
- Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
- Getbol, Korean Tidal Flat (2021)
- Gaya Tumuli (2023)

Biosphere Reserves

- Mount Sorak (1982)
- Jeju Island (2002)
- Shinan Dadohae (2009)
- Gwangneung Forest (2010)
- Gochang (2013)
- Suncheon (2018)
- Gangwon Eco Peace (2019)
- Yeoncheon Imjin River (2019)
- Wando Archipelago (2021)
- Changnyeong (2024)

Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Royal Ancestral Ritual in the Jongmyo Shrine and its Music (2001)
- Pansori Epic Chant (2003)
- Gangneung Danoje Festival (2005)
- Yeongsanjae (2009)
- Namsadang Nori (2009)
- Jeju Chilmeoridang Yeongdeunggut (2009)
- Ganggangsullae (2009)
- Cheoyongmu (2009)
- Gagok, Lyric Song Cycles Accompanied by an Orchestra (2010)
- Daemokjang, Traditional Wooden Architecture (2010)
- Falconry, a Living Human Heritage (2010)
- Weaving of Mosi (Fine Ramie) in the Hansan Region (2011)
- Taekkyeon, a Traditional Korean Martial Art (2011)
- Jultagi, Tightrope Walking (2011)
- Arirang, Lyrical Folk Song in the Republic of Korea (2012)
- Kimjang, Making and Sharing Kimchi in the Republic of Korea (2013)
- Nongak, Community Band Music, Dance and Rituals in the Republic of Korea (2014)
- Tugging Rituals and Games (2015)
- Culture of Jeju Haenyeo (Women Divers) (2016)
- Traditional Korean Wrestling (Ssirum/Ssireum) (2018)
- Yeondeunghoe, Lantern Lighting Festival in the Republic of Korea (2020)
- Talchum, Mask Dance Drama in the Republic of Korea (2022)

Global Geoparks

- Jeju Island (2010)
- Cheongsong (2017)
- Mudeungsan (2018)
- Hantangang River (2020)
- Jeonbuk West Coast (2023)

Memory of the World

- The Hunmin Chongum Manuscript (1997)
- The Annals of the Choson Dynasty (1997)
- Seungjeongwon Ilgi, the Diaries of the Royal Secretariat (2001)
- Baegun hwasang chorok buljo jikji simche yojeol (vol.II), the second volume of "Anthology of Great Buddhist Priests' Zen Teachings" (2001)
- Uigwe: The Royal Protocols of the Joseon Dynasty (2007)
- Printing woodblocks of the Tripitaka Koreana and miscellaneous Buddhist scriptures (2007)
- Donguibogam: Principles and Practice of Eastern Medicine (2009)
- Ilseongnok: Records of Daily Reflections (2011)
- Human Rights Documentary Heritage 1980 Archives for the May 18th Democratic Uprising against Military Regime, in Gwangju, Republic of Korea (2011)
- Nanjung Ilgi: War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin (2013)
- Archives of Saemaul Undong (New Community Movement) (2013)
- Confucian Printing Woodblocks (2015)
- The Archives of the KBS Special Live Broadcast "Finding Dispersed Families" (2015)
- Royal Seal and Investiture Book Collection of the Joseon Dynasty (2017)
- Documents on Joseon Tongsinisa/ Chosen Tsushinshi: The History of Peace Building and Cultural Exchanges between Korea and Japan from the 17th to 19th Century (2017)
- Archives of the April 19 Revolution (2023)
- Archives of the Donhak Peasant Revolution (2023)

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Creating a Better Future Together



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Korean
National Commission