

UNESCO

What it is

What it does



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

UNESCO Constitution



UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

- was born on November 16, 1945.

For this specialized UN agency, it is not enough to build classrooms in devastated countries or to publish scientific breakthroughs. Education, science, culture and communication are the means to a far more ambitious goal: **to build peace in the minds of men.**

Today, UNESCO works as **a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter** to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. The Organization also serves as **a clearinghouse** - that disseminates and shares information and knowledge - while **helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities** in diverse fields. In short, UNESCO promotes international co-operation among its 190* Member States and six Associate Members in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

*As of October 2003



UNESCO works to **create the conditions for true dialogue, based upon respect for commonly shared values and the dignity of each civilization and culture.**

This role is critical, particularly in the face of terrorism, which constitutes an attack against humanity. The world urgently requires global visions of sustainable development based upon observance of human rights, mutual respect and the alleviation of poverty, all of which lie at the heart of UNESCO's mission and activities.

Through its strategies and activities, UNESCO is actively pursuing the **United Nations Millennium Development Goals**, especially those aiming to:

- ❖ **halve** the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries by 2015
- ❖ **achieve** universal primary education in all countries by 2015
- ❖ **eliminate** gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005
- ❖ **help** countries implement a national strategy for sustainable development by 2005 to reverse current trends in the loss of environmental resources by 2015.

www.un.org/millenniumgoals

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UNESCO

How does it work?

The **General Conference** is the primary decision-making body, comprising representatives of all Member States. It meets every two years to determine the policies and main lines of work of the Organization. Following the principle of one vote per country, it approves UNESCO's programme and budget. Every four years, it appoints the Director-General based upon the recommendation of the Executive Board.

www.unesco.org/confgen

The **Executive Board**, composed of 58 Member States, meets twice a year to ensure that decisions taken by the General Conference are implemented. It is also responsible for preparing the work of the General Conference and examining the Organization's programme and budget.

www.unesco.org/exboard

The Secretariat consists of the **Director-General** and **staff**. The Director-General is the executive head of the Organization. He or she formulates proposals for appropriate action by the Conference and Board and prepares a draft biennial programme and budget. The staff implements the approved programme. There are about 2,145 members from some 160 countries (April 2003). As a result of a new decentralization policy, more than 640 staff members work in UNESCO's 53 field offices around the world.

UNESCO is the only UN agency to have a system of **National Commissions** in 190 Member and Associate States. The Commissions form a vital link between civil society and the Organization. They provide valuable insight concerning the Organization's programme and help implement many initiatives including training programmes, studies, public awareness campaigns and media outreach. The Commissions also develop new partnerships with the private sector, which can provide valuable technical expertise and financial resources.

www.unesco.org/ncp/natcom

UNESCO plays an integral role in the UN system and works closely with a wide range of regional and national organizations. Some 350 **non-governmental organizations** (NGOs) maintain official relations with UNESCO and hundreds more work with the Organization on specific projects.

How is it financed?

The regular two-year budget is financed by Member States through assessed contributions. The proposed regular budget for 2004 and 2005 is US\$610 million. UNESCO also benefits from substantial extra-budgetary funding to strengthen its programmes, especially in the field, and to increase its outreach activities. In 2002, these extra-budgetary resources amounted to some US\$ 360 million.

Get involved...

✳ Join one of the 5,000 UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations in about 120 countries.

www.unesco.org/ncp/clubs

✳ Contact one of the 7,500 Associated Schools that organize peace education activities in about 170 countries.

www.unesco.org/education/asp

✳ Send a contribution to the Co-Action Programme that each year finances about 100 development projects in rural areas of the poorest countries.

www.unesco.org/coaction

✳ UNESCO accepts a limited number of national officials, researchers and university students as interns to work in the Organization's fields of interest for one to three months. Several fellowships and student grants are also available.

www.unesco.org/fellowships



Koichiro Matsuura of Japan was elected Director-General in 1999.

Since 1946, UNESCO has been led by: Julian Huxley of the United Kingdom (1946-1948), Jaime Torres Bodet of Mexico (1948-1952), John W. Taylor of the United States (1952-1953), Luther Evans of the United States (1953-1958), Vittorino Veronese of Italy (1958-1961), René Maheu of France (1961-1974), Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal (1974-1987), Federico Mayor of Spain (1987-1999)



An international publishing house

UNESCO Publishing issues about 120 titles a year under its own imprint or co-published with academic and commercial publishers. Most works are in English and French, but also in the four other official languages of the Organization (Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish). In addition, many UNESCO titles are also published in about 70 other languages, through licensing agreements with commercial and institutional publishers.

UNESCO books, scientific maps, CD-Roms, DVDs and videos are available through a network of national distributors in 100 countries and can also be consulted at UNESCO depository libraries in some 160 countries.

The catalogue and a selection of digital books are also available online. www.unesco.org/publishing



UNESCO Prizes

UNESCO awards 35 international prizes in its fields of competence, such as the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize, the L'Oréal – UNESCO Prize for Women in Science as well as several international literacy awards. The annual and biennial prizes vary in financial terms from about US\$20,000 to US\$150,000.

www.unesco.org/prizes

UNESCO Milestones:

November 16, 1945: representatives of 37 countries meet in London to sign UNESCO's Constitution which comes into force on November 4, 1946 after ratification by 20 signatories.

1948: UNESCO recommends that Member States make free primary education compulsory and universal.

1952: An intergovernmental conference convened by UNESCO adopts the Universal Copyright Convention. In the decades following World War II, the Convention served to extend copyright protection to numerous states not then party to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886).

1956: The Republic of South Africa withdraws from UNESCO claiming that some of the Organization's publications amount to "interference" in the country's "racial problems". The state rejoins the Organization in 1994 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.

1958: Inauguration of UNESCO's permanent Headquarters in Paris designed by Marcel Breuer (US), Pier-Luigi Nervi (Italy) and Bernard Zehrffuss (France).

1960: Launching of the Nubia Campaign in Egypt to move the Great Temple of Abu Simbel to keep it from being swamped by the Nile after construction of the Aswan Dam. During the 20-year campaign, 22 monuments and architectural complexes are relocated. This is the first and largest in a series of campaigns including Moenjodaro (Pakistan), Fez (Morocco), Kathmandu (Nepal), Borobudur (Indonesia) and the Acropolis (Greece).

1968: UNESCO organizes the first intergovernmental conference aimed at reconciling the environment and development, now known as "sustainable development". This led to the creation of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.

1972: The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage is adopted. The World Heritage Committee is established in 1976 and the first sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1978.

1974: H.H. Pope Paul VI awards the John XXIII Peace Prize to UNESCO.

1975: The United Nations University is established in Tokyo under the auspices of the UN and UNESCO.

1978: UNESCO adopts the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice. Subsequent reports on the issue by the Director-General serve to discredit and dismiss the pseudo-scientific foundations of racism.

1980: The first two volumes of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* are published. Similar series focus on other regions, notably Central Asia and the Caribbean.

1984: The United States withdraws from the Organization citing disagreement over management and other issues. The United Kingdom and Singapore withdraw in 1985. The Organization's budget drops considerably.

1990: The World Conference on Education for All, in Jomtiem, Thailand, launches a global movement to provide basic education for all children, youths and adults. Held ten years later in Dakar, Senegal, the World Education Forum commits governments to achieving basic education for all by 2015.

1992: Creation of the Memory of the World programme to protect irreplaceable library treasures and archive collections. It now includes sound, film and television archives.

1997: The United Kingdom returns to UNESCO.

1998: The Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, developed and adopted by UNESCO in 1997, is endorsed by the UN.

1999: Director-General Koichiro Matsuura undertakes major reforms to restructure and decentralize the Organization's staff and activities.

2001: UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity is adopted by the General Conference.

2002: The United States announces its decision to return to UNESCO.

Education



■ Today, **862 million of the world's citizens are illiterate**, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Moreover, one in five children between the ages of six to 11 in developing countries — about 115 million — is not in school, 56% of these children are girls.

The international community has pledged to reverse these trends and achieve **Education for All (EFA)** by 2015. The World Education Forum (Dakar 2000) agreed to reach six goals by 2015:

- ① expand early childhood care and education
- ② improve access to and complete free schooling of good quality for all children of primary school age
- ③ greatly increase learning opportunities for youth and adults
- ④ improve adult literacy rates by 50%
- ⑤ eliminate gender disparities in schooling
- ⑥ improve all aspects of education quality.

www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000

UNESCO is leading global efforts to achieve these goals by mobilizing political will and coordinating efforts of all stakeholders in education including development partners, governments, NGOs and civil society. EFA is at the heart of UNESCO's major educational activities to:

- assist countries in formulating educational policies
- develop and disseminate materials such as best practices, manuals and teacher training packages designed to cover a wide range of issues, from sustainable development to peace education
- establish new norms and standards on vocational and technical education, for example, and the recognition of higher education qualifications
- identify new trends and appropriate strategies to cope with emerging issues in education, such as AIDS
- direct special attention to Africa, the least developed countries and the nine high population countries — Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan — which are home to more than 70% of the world's adult illiterates and almost half of its out-of-school children
- develop innovative ways of providing education for people with special needs, living on the streets and in conflict and emergency zones
- broker partnerships between public, private and non-governmental actors to ensure better coordination of efforts and to sustain political momentum.

www.unesco.org/education/efa

Some 500 UNESCO chairs and networks have been established in more than 100 countries to promote international co-operation in higher education.

www.unesco.org/education/educprog/unitwin

The goal of **gender equality** cuts across all of these activities and is the subject of a series of field projects, ranging from distance education programmes and micro-credit schemes in rural areas to counseling services for women and girls in Africa.

www.unesco.org/education/mebam

To help people learn to live together

UNESCO is promoting new educational approaches for human rights and sustainable development, while helping to reform curricula and revise textbooks to reflect socio-cultural needs and to promote a culture of peace. These activities and others underpin its mandate to lead the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001 – 10) and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 14).

www.unesco.org/iycp

UNESCO is also the lead agency for the **UN Literacy Decade**, which began in 2003. While coordinating the efforts of diverse partners, UNESCO is developing new tools to measure the impact of literacy campaigns and programmes. UNESCO estimates that if current trends continue, the adult illiterate population will drop to 824 million by 2010, which still represents one adult in six.

www.unesco.org/education/litdecade

Specialized UNESCO institutes and centres in the field of education:

- International Bureau of Education (Geneva) www.ibe.unesco.org
- International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (Addis Ababa)
- International Institute for Educational Planning (Paris) www.unesco.org/iiep
- UNESCO Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Caracas)
- UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (Moscow) www.iite.ru
- UNESCO Institute for Education (Hamburg) www.unesco.org/education/uir
- European Centre for Higher Education (Bucharest) www.cepes.ro
- International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Bonn) www.unevoc.unesco.org

The **UNESCO Institute for Statistics** (Montreal) provides data in all of the Organization's fields of competence

www.unesco.org/statistics

culture

■ **UNESCO is in the vanguard of international efforts to protect heritage.** The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in 1972, was founded on the premise that certain places on Earth are of outstanding universal value and as such should form part of the common heritage of humankind. While fully respecting the national sovereignty, and without prejudice to property rights provided by national legislation, the States Parties to the Convention recognize that the protection of the **World Heritage** is the duty of the international community as a whole. The World Heritage List currently includes more than 700 natural and cultural sites, from India's Taj Mahal to Mali's ancient city of Timbuktu and such natural wonders as the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. The World Heritage Centre is the permanent secretariate of the Convention.

<http://whc.unesco.org>



UNESCO provides technical assistance to safeguard exceptional sites, such as the ancient Khmer capital of Angkor (Cambodia) and the city of Fez in Morocco. A new initiative is underway in Afghanistan, the cultural heritage of which is among the richest in the world.

These monuments and natural sites reflect one dimension of our shared heritage. A tremendous wealth of cultural expressions can also be found, in particular in developing countries, in the form of intangible heritage — the festivals, songs, languages and meeting places which fuel creativity and solidarity. UNESCO is developing the first international legal instrument to protect this heritage. An international jury selected the first 19 **Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity** in 2001 and will regularly add to this inventory, designed to provide legal protection and financial assistance.

www.unesco.org/culture/heritage/intangible



By adopting the **Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity** in 2001, UNESCO Member States reaffirmed their conviction that cultural diversity is one of the roots of development "as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature" and categorically rejected the idea that conflicts between cultures and civilizations are inevitable.

www.unesco.org/culture/pluralism

UNESCO is working on diverse fronts to implement the principles and action plan of the Declaration, which aims to promote **dialogue among cultures and civilizations**.

From the Silk Roads to the Slave Route, several academic research programmes shed light on positive and negative forces shaping cultural diversity in the past and present. Studies like the *Atlas of Endangered Languages* highlight the need to preserve linguistic diversity, while the *Index Translationum* provides an international bibliography of translated works.

www.unesco.org/culture/xtrans

UNESCO is building a **Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity** that brokers new partnerships between public and private actors to support local cultural industries - such as music and publishing - in developing countries. The alliance works to increase the availability of diverse, affordable cultural products worldwide, to prevent piracy and to encourage respect for international copyright regulations.

www.unesco.org/culture/alliance

Key UNESCO legal instruments for culture

1950: Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials (Florence Agreement) with its Protocol (Nairobi) to improve the circulation of knowledge.

1952: Universal Copyright Convention, revised in 1971, protects intellectual property - from scientific and literary texts to film and sculpture - by the familiar ©.

1954: Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

1970: Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. This is the cornerstone for international efforts to crackdown on illicit art trade.

1972: Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage: the first to put forth the idea that humanity possesses a common heritage and the legal foundation for the World Heritage List.

1980: Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist recognizes the special labour conditions of artists and their unique role in society's development.

2001: Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage: the first to protect such sites as the Alexandria lighthouse in Egypt and shipwrecks over a century-old.

2001: UNESCO's General Conference adopts the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which is recognized as part of the "common heritage of humanity".

natural sciences

■ UNESCO began sounding the alarm over the need for sustainable development in 1968 by organizing a groundbreaking conference questioning our unbridled exploitation of nature. Since then, the Organization has developed several international programmes to better understand and manage the Earth's resources:

Water is a major priority for UNESCO. The **International Hydrological Programme (IHP)** aims to provide the scientific knowledge, technical training and policy advice required to manage this precious resource efficiently, fairly and environmentally. IHP is increasingly involved in developing tools and strategies to prevent water conflicts from erupting between and within states. www.unesco.org/water/ihp
The **UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education**, in Delft, the Netherlands, is the hub of a global network of partners in water education and capacity building. www.ihe.nl

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC): by coordinating the research of UN agencies and institutes, the IOC continuously monitors ocean conditions to improve weather forecasts, predict the onset of El Niño and provide early warnings of tsunamis and storm surges. IOC is also helping to build the Global Ocean Observing System, which will weave together data from special buoys, ships and satellites to better understand the links between ocean currents and climate.
www.unesco.org/ioc

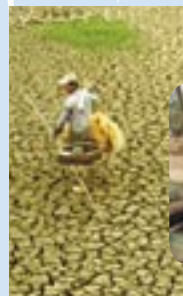
International Geological Correlation Programme (IGCP): with the help of the International Union of Geological Sciences, scientists in more than 150 countries are improving techniques to assess energy and mineral resources while expanding the knowledge base of the Earth's geological processes and reducing the risks of natural disasters in developing countries.
www.unesco.org/science/earthsciences/igcp

Man and the Biosphere (MAB)
Programme: this network of more than 400 special places for people and nature covers a majority of the world's land ecosystems. Each biosphere reserve is like a "living laboratory" that tests ways of managing natural resources while fostering economic development.
www.unesco.org/mab

Coastal Regions and Small Islands Platform: through the innovative use of new information technologies, small islands are given a global voice in today's knowledge society while working together to develop and disseminate "wise coastal practices".
www.unesco.org/csi

UNESCO helps reinforce the capacities of developing countries, specifically in the basic and life sciences, engineering and technology. In partnership with diverse funding agencies, UNESCO provides advice and technical assistance so that governments can formulate and implement effective science and technology policies and strategies.

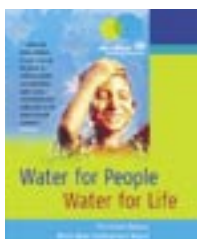
UNESCO works with a range of UN agencies, scientific and technological organizations and NGOs. Two major partners include the International Council for Science — an umbrella organization for scientific research councils and academies — and the International Council for Engineering and Technology.
www.icsu.org



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Preventing brain-drain
Under the aegis of UNESCO and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the **Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics** is promoting research in physics and mathematics in developing countries, notably by offering scientists training that can be applied in their home countries. Based in Trieste (Italy), the centre hosts more than 4,000 scientists each year and is the base of several programmes, including the **Third World Academy of Sciences**, with more than 600 fellows and associate fellows.
www.ictp.trieste.it
www.twas.org

Renewable Energy Programme: to help developing countries define and implement renewable energy programmes, including solar energy, while raising public awareness of their importance and efficiency.
www.unesco.org/science/wsp



The **World Water Development Report** provides the most comprehensive, up-to-date overview of the state of this resource. Every UN agency and commission dealing with water contributed towards the larger goal of monitoring progress against water-related targets in such fields as health, food, ecosystems, cities, industry, energy, risk management and governance. UNESCO hosts the secretariat of 23 UN partners, which constitute the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP). www.unesco.org/water/wwap

communication and information

UNESCO is helping libraries and archives make the transition to the digital age. For example, by digitizing parchments of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences or extraordinary scientific manuscripts of Arab and Islamic civilizations, UNESCO is improving access to culturally diverse information. The Organization has played a key role in the conception and construction of the *Bibliotheca Alexandrina*, the largest library in the Middle East and Africa, inspired by the legendary institution founded over 2000 years ago by Ptolemy I.

Memory of the World

Through UNESCO's Memory of the World programme, an international advisory committee maintains a registry to protect and digitize documentary heritage of universal value. Priceless pieces include the Schubert Collection of the Vienna City Library, the oldest written version of the Koran, known as the Mushaf of Othman, as well as the most comprehensive collection of Chinese traditional music.

www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm

Communication, information and knowledge are a driving force of sustainable development. For UNESCO, they must also become the basic tools of the poor as they improve their own lives. To build knowledge societies, **the Organization focuses on the human dimensions of the digital divide** — cultural and linguistic diversity of contents, access and empowerment of civil society.
www.unesco.org/webworld

A key part of this strategy lies in promoting access to information through a range of activities. For example, UNESCO is creating ICT (information and communication technology) training opportunities in particular for women and young people, while developing and distributing free software. UNESCO also supports community multimedia centres and telecentres in isolated areas of developing countries.



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While bridging the digital divide, **UNESCO promotes freedom of expression and freedom of the press as a basic human right.**

By providing policy advice and developing networks, the Organization encourages governments to develop standards and legislative instruments to defend this principle. UNESCO also provides direct support to independent and pluralistic media, especially within countries in transition and in conflict and post-conflict zones. In Afghanistan, for example, UNESCO has been working with the government and media professionals to develop laws favourable to press freedom while providing direct assistance to re-launch the independent Kabul Weekly and the national news agency.

UNESCO serves as a **watchdog for press freedom** by publicly denouncing serious abuses, like the assassination and detention of media professionals. It works to protect threatened individuals through diplomatic channels. In addition, the annual UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, worth US\$25,000, is awarded to individuals and institutes defending freedom of expression at great risk.

The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) works to improve the technical and human resources of independent and pluralistic media in developing countries and those in transition. The IPDC helps to fund a range of projects – from training courses to the modernization of news agencies and broadcasting organizations and support for community media.

www.unesco.org/webworld/ipdc

UNESCO's Programme for Creative Content seeks to stimulate innovation in local content production for television, radio and new media in developing countries. By promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, UNESCO is helping to build a knowledge society in which disadvantaged communities may fully participate.

<http://portal.unesco.org/ci/cc>

Through the Information for All Programme, UNESCO is fostering debate on the political, ethical and societal challenges of the emerging global knowledge society and developing projects to promote equitable access to information. The programme serves as a platform for international policy discussions and guidelines promoting access to and preservation of information.

www.unesco.org/webworld/ifap

social & human sciences

UNESCO has placed ethics and human rights at the center of its concerns

■ In the field of science and technology – specifically bioethics – the Organization develops ethical guidelines, standards and legal instruments including:

▼ the **Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights**, produced by UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and adopted in 1997. This landmark Declaration serves as a legal reference and a basis for reflection on such critical issues as human cloning. Work is now underway to develop a new international declaration on human genetic data.

www.unesco.org/ethics

▼ the work of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST), which brings together leading intellectuals and scientists to develop ethical guidelines in four areas: outer space, the information society, energy consumption and freshwater.

www.unesco.org/ethics



The International Social Science Journal

published in six languages, aims to bridge the gap between communities of social scientists working in diverse fields and regions.
www.unesco.org/issj

From the teacher of a one-room schoolhouse in Africa to education ministers in Asia, UNESCO works at all levels to promote information dissemination and education on human rights. By providing teacher-training materials, organizing conferences and helping to develop national, regional and international strategies and networks, **UNESCO strives to make human rights and the struggle against discrimination and intolerance vital components of research and policy-making.** While promoting the international conventions and instruments related to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Organization also encourages research into neglected areas of human rights, related to cultural and social issues, such as gender equality and the right to education.



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▼ UNESCO's ethical approach to scientific progress also applies to the larger social transformations linked to globalization. Through its **Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme**, UNESCO conducts studies on issues such as urbanism and governance through a range of grassroots projects, consultations and academic networks. MOST increasingly focuses on research to help national and local governments develop appropriate governance policies and structures in multi-cultural societies, stressing social inclusion and the **eradication of poverty.**

www.unesco.org/most

Emphasizing the importance of **prospective studies**, UNESCO plays a major role as an ethical, philosophical and scientific forum on issues ranging from human security and conflict prevention to inter-cultural dialogue, social transformations citizenship and globalization.

The **21st Century Talks**, regularly held in different parts of the world, bring together scientists, philosophers, researchers and artists to address critical questions shaping societies.

www.unesco.org/shs