



unesco

Strategic Results Report

2024

Innovation • Impact • Insight

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Executive Summary

1. The Strategic Results Report, 2024 (SRR24) details UNESCO's strategic impact during a turbulent four-year period marked by increasing global crises and volatility. From the COVID-19 pandemic and intensifying climate change to a rise in conflicts, natural disasters, and rapid technological transformations, our shared global ambition to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has faced significant hurdles.
2. In this demanding context, UNESCO, like many other organizations, was put to the test. The SRR24 assesses the Organization's impact during this time of profound change, exploring why UNESCO's interventions are crucial amid today's challenges and opportunities. It also reflects on what is necessary to achieve impact and why, at times, efforts have not translated into larger change. This provides important lessons for how we manage our current programme portfolio, but also for how we need to plan and adapt our work in the future. With the adoption of a new four-year Programme and Budget for 2026-2029, we have a major opportunity to carry our strengths into the future and address areas that require reinforcement. In this context, the SRR24 should be considered alongside the Director-General's Preliminary Proposals for the 43 C/5.

Key Messages

3. **MESSAGE 1: The SRR24 shows that UNESCO thrives in times of transformations.** The Organization demonstrated a newfound agility, adaptability, and leadership in shaping global discourses and responses to some of the defining issues of today: the future of education, the crucial role of the sciences for sustainable development, the ethics of new technologies, the transformative power of culture and the threats to freedom of expression. Staying true to its historic role as a hub for intellectual cooperation, UNESCO brought foresight and innovative approaches to a landscape fraught with uncertainty and transformation. It built new global coalitions, united dispersed actors around common objectives, contributed new insights to increasingly complex questions, and identified emerging and future trends, often at the forefront of global thinking. The SRR24 provides many examples of this. It is a key strength, and one that is needed more than ever to help countries safely navigate today's transformations.
4. **MESSAGE 2: The SRR24 period includes many examples of how UNESCO increasingly uses its mandate as an integrated toolkit to protect and advance the SDGs.** In a world grappling with complexity and interwoven crises, no single-sector approach or organization alone can provide a sufficient solution. For decades, UNESCO has concentrated on strengthening systems by integrating efforts to improve policy and legal frameworks, enhance national capacities, monitor and benchmark progress, conduct sector analyses, set standards, and provide platforms for technical exchanges and consensus building. But the Organization's mandate in education, the sciences, culture, and communications and information offers potential for an even more connected, human-centric approach. Drawing on current examples and lessons learned throughout the SRR24 period, the Director-General's Preliminary Proposals present further ideas for promoting more integrated programming across and within sectors, including establishing appropriate internal and external incentives and reporting structures.
5. **MESSAGE 3: Despite its comparatively modest budget (around 1% of multilateral funding),¹ UNESCO has been able to achieve considerable impact over the review period, often punching well above its weight.** By collaborating with partners, forming strategic knowledge and action alliances, leveraging new technologies, and leading global debates from the frontlines, UNESCO has amplified its reach and impact. However, the report also

¹ For the data, please see: [Unsceb.org/fs-revenue-type](https://unsceb.org/fs-revenue-type)

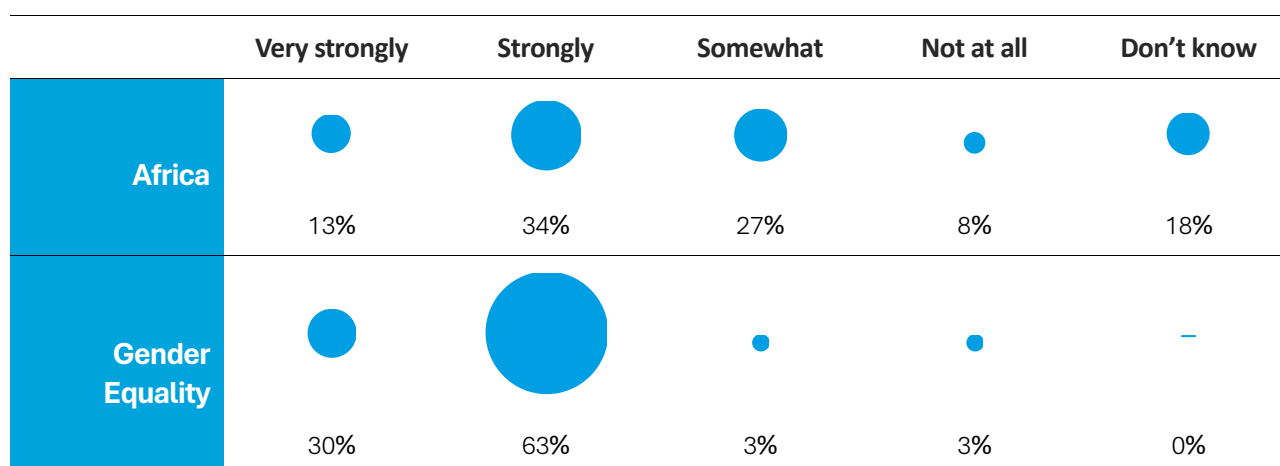
reveals that in some instances, the potential for greater impact has not been fully realized, leaving some opportunities untapped. Boosting quality funding will be critical for a more agile response and to enhance impact in underfunded areas.

6. **MESSAGE 4: The monitoring frameworks for the SRR24 period do not enable UNESCO to systematically capture and analyse corporate performance at the outcome level.** Over the past four years, these frameworks lacked performance indicators at the outcome level, using instead output-level indicators that varied in their levels of change. This approach hindered the establishment of a clear results chain and complicated performance analysis, including the linking of results to resources. The situation is exacerbated by an outdated 20-year-old monitoring system that has struggled to consistently capture programme performance across sectors. Navigating today's world with a map from twenty years ago is challenging. UNESCO now has the opportunity to modernize its strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting systems through the new UNESCO project. The next four-year programme also offers the chance to design a monitoring framework that better captures UNESCO's results at different levels, and across different programme sectors. These updates will be essential for UNESCO to accurately track, maximize, and communicate its influence in an increasingly complex global environment. Having open discussions about performance gaps and how to address them will be crucial to enhance performance and build trust with partners.

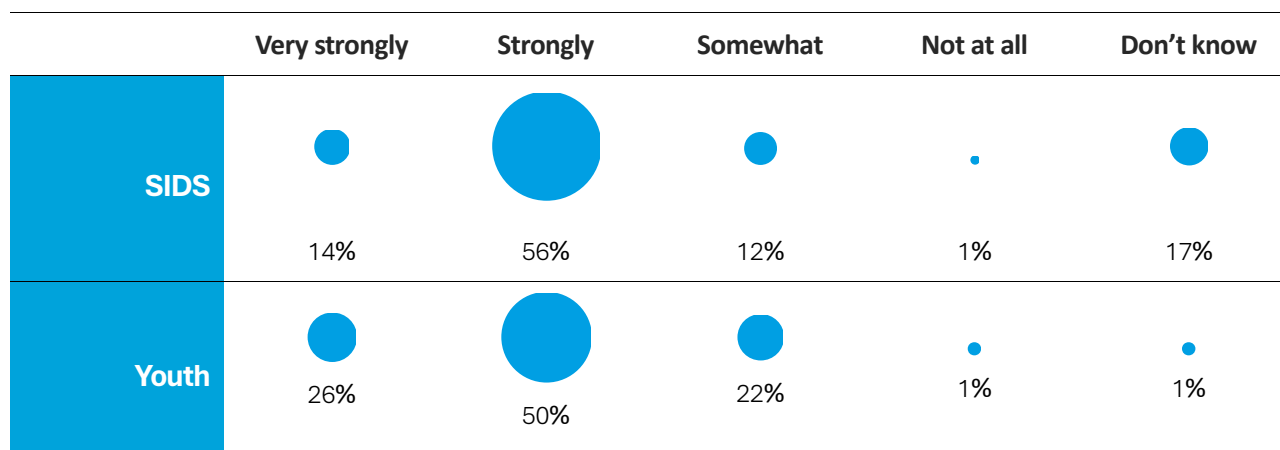
7. **MESSAGE 5: The SRR24 shows that UNESCO is increasingly called upon to have an impact at field level.** The needs of countries, especially amid lagging SDG progress and the impacts of climate change and technological advancements, are significant, and UNESCO's specialized expertise is in high demand. In the Education Sector alone, UNESCO's support extended to 177 countries over the SRR24 period. This demand comes from countries in different development contexts. For example, for the first time during the reporting period, UNESCO was asked to intervene in active war zones. But UNESCO also provided support in protracted crisis situations, during recovery and reconstruction phases and in response to natural disasters. With only 54 offices, UNESCO has a relatively small presence on the ground. Going into the next planning period, reinforcing the delivery capacities of its field offices will be prioritized, by further strengthening alignment with national priorities, optimizing support structures, and clarifying accountability lines.

8. **MESSAGE 6: UNESCO is arguably one of the most networked organizations within the UN system, but some of this potential remains untapped.** UNESCO's sites alone cover 6% of the earth's land mass and protect more than one fifth of mapped species, offering unique demonstration hubs for sustainable development. In addition, UNESCO's network of National Commissions, category 2 institutes, UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN, associated schools (ASP-net), NGOs in official partnership, and creative and learning cities constitutes an unparalleled reservoir of expertise. The SRR24 provides examples of how UNESCO has used this network to amplify its messages, deepen programme impact, and broaden its expertise base. But while some of this potential is already being utilized, much remains untapped. One challenge is that this network has tremendously grown over the past few years while resources available to manage and leverage it have not kept pace. For the next planning period, the Organization should invest in ways to leverage this network more effectively. UNESCO's ecosystem of assets has the potential to not only amplify programme impact but can also bring multilateralism and the work of UNESCO closer to communities and decision makers. This will be critical in the years to come to demonstrate the added value of multilateralism and secure the required resources.

9. **MESSAGE 7: UNESCO has made strong political commitments to Africa and Gender Equality.** The SRR24 highlights numerous examples of how UNESCO's Global Priorities have been effectively integrated into its programmes across all strategic objectives, enhancing both the impact and relevance of its work. However, the past four years have also offered valuable lessons in areas such as resource mobilization, partnership building, alignment with national priorities, and internal coordination across sectors. For instance, ensuring that Global Priority Africa delivers transformative results for African Member States will require ongoing, close consultations with national stakeholders to maintain relevance. Similarly, while there has been increased focus on Global Priority Gender Equality, additional focus will be necessary to achieve transformative outcomes in a changing operational context.

INFOGRAPHIC 1: Asked how much UNESCO's focus had increased on Global Priorities, Member States said:

10. **MESSAGE 8: Priority Groups SIDS and Youth have gained greater prominence, but the specific operational implications of this will need to be more clearly defined.** As the SRR24 illustrates, there is strong political commitment to UNESCO's Priority Groups, evidenced by increased financial resources, additional staff, the launch of new accelerator programmes for SIDS, and heightened visibility across programme sectors. This aligns with feedback from Member States, though with some variation. Moving forward, it will be crucial to further clarify how UNESCO supports and operationalizes these priorities across sectors, how their implementation is monitored (both through programmes and specific initiatives like the SIDS Accelerator Programmes), and how they can be better resourced.

INFOGRAPHIC 2: Asked how much UNESCO's focus had increased on Priority Groups, Member States said:

11. **MESSAGE 9: While the current systems do not allow for systematic linkages between results and resources, the SRR provides evidence of the importance of predictable, sustainable, and flexible funding.** A well-funded regular budget is critical for programme impact. UNESCO's assessed contributions provide predictable resources to fund the Organization's infrastructure, its expertise and the support structures that service its statutory obligations. Over the 2020-2023 reporting period, UNESCO faced a stagnant regular budget, with minimal adjustments for inflation, despite an increase in demand for reporting obligations and statutory servicing. At the same time, the operating environment has become more complex, demanding organizations to update their systems and undergo important digital transformations. The lack of investment in the corporate planning, monitoring and reporting system is a case in point. In the current planning period (2024-2025), some of these gaps are being addressed thanks to a membership of now 194 Member States and an accompanying

increase in the regular budget envelope. This brings the regular budget back to where it was in 2010-2011. In times of fiscal pressures, it is important to protect these regular resources to ensure the Organization can maintain a modern infrastructure that is essential for delivering strong programme results.

12. The SRR also shows that voluntary contributions now represent an important part of the Organization's integrated budget and have played a key role in allowing UNESCO to achieve results, particularly in the field. At the same time, flexibility, predictability, and scale of funding needs to improve. While there has been some improvement in flexibility (with an increase from 28% to 41% in softly earmarked contributions as a proportion of all funds mobilized in the past four years), UNESCO remains one of the very few UN agencies that does not receive any unearmarked voluntary contributions. This impacts the Organization's ability to be agile, respond to crises, innovate and can undermine programmatic coherence. Going forward, it will be important to enhance the conditions to attract flexible and predictable funding at scale, notably through a greater alignment between the Organization's programmatic and funding frameworks, as well as enhanced partner engagement, visibility strategies and improved reporting.

13. The results presented in this report would not have been possible without the support of all of UNESCO's Member States. They represent a strategic compact to build peace on the basis of humanity's moral and intellectual solidarity.

Methodology

14. The 2024 Strategic Results Report (SRR24) presents UNESCO's achievements over four years, covering the period from 2020 to 2023. It reports UNESCO's results at a strategic level, capturing the higher-level impact that the Organization's work has achieved over the reporting period. It aims to show how UNESCO can leverage its finance, expertise and networks beyond its direct programme results.

15. In the context of the SRR24, strategic results are defined as:

Tangible and measurable effects that result from specific activities or interventions. These changes occur in the medium-term and reflect the benefits experienced by target populations or systems due to the implemented programmes. Outcome-level changes typically include improvements in knowledge, behaviours, skills, practices, or conditions that directly contribute to achieving long-term goals or impacts.

16. Results are presented against each of the Organization's four Strategic Objectives, instead of grouping results by Programme Sectors. This allows us to tell a story of how UNESCO is mobilizing its assets *across* the Organization's areas of expertise to address some of today's defining challenges: the global education crisis, the impact of climate change and environmental degradation, the strains to social cohesion and tolerance that societies all over the world are experiencing, and the challenges posed by the fast pace of new technological developments.

17. UNESCO's Global Priorities and Priority Groups are key enablers of its results but are also areas the Organization selected for special attention. Thus, their reporting is both embedded in the results narrative and highlighted on dedicated results pages in line with the Organization's commitment. In addition, the strategic results reporting is complemented by a short review of UNESCO's institutional performance over the reporting period.

18. While strategic results are being reported, performance is also being assessed through this report to better understand what drives strategic results and what hinders or reduces their impact. To do so, five critical questions have guided the performance analysis:

1. Are our programmes relevant in the current global context and responding to national challenges and priorities?
2. Do we have a comparative advantage in this area and are we leveraging it effectively?
3. Do we have the capacity to deliver impactful programmes?

4. Are our programmes sustainable to effect lasting impact and structural change?
5. Are we able to show demonstrable results based on clear metrics and are we communicating them effectively?

19. We hope that the lessons we learned, both for each Strategic Objective and overall, will help Member States prepare their thinking for the next four-year programme and budget. Forward-looking plans to adapt to emerging issues are presented for discussion and consideration for Member States agreement.

Evidence and Limitations:

20. The SRR24 uses mixed methods and multiple evidence sources for its analysis of strategic impact, including:

- Results data pulled from the corporate planning system.
- Self-assessment of results by Programme Sectors.
- Desk review of UNESCO documents (evaluation reports, publications, etc.).
- Survey of Member States' views on UNESCO's performance (a summary of the responses is presented as 220 EX/17.INF as part of the Director-General's preliminary proposal for the draft 43 C/5).
- Financial expenditure and voluntary contribution data.
- Media analytics and analysis

21. While results have been captured as comprehensively and accurately as possible, there are methodological limitations that are important to note:

- **SRR24 Reporting Across Cycles:** The SRR24 reporting spans across two different medium-term strategies (the 37 C/4 and the 41 C/4), covering the last two years of the former and the first two years of the latter. The Strategies are framed by different Strategic Objectives and Outcomes. Notably, the 41 C/4 has seen a much tighter prioritization, reducing Strategic Objectives down to four from nine Strategic Objectives under the 37 C/4. To present Member States with a cumulative results picture, the two frameworks needed to be combined, making an approximate alignment.
- **Lack of Outcome-level Indicators:** In the results frameworks for the SRR24 period, Member States did not adopt any indicators at outcome level. This made higher level results reporting more complicated. However, outcome-level changes can to some extent be deduced from current output indicators, allowing for an approximate reporting of higher-level results.
- **Design of Output Indicators and Targets:** The design of output indicators under the 40 C/5 and 41 C/5 was inconsistent in several cases, hindering a comprehensive analysis of the Organization's performance. Additionally, some targets were set conservatively, resulting in many indicators showing very high levels of performance. This situation made it challenging to report meaningfully on output level performance and thus scorecards were not included. This will be rectified in the 43 C/5.
- **Funding Analysis:** Analysis of funding gaps (i.e. the difference between what was originally budgeted and what was mobilized) has been added for each Strategic Objective. Some initial analysis is possible based on the data available. While the SRR covers the period from 2020 to 2023, outputs were revised for the second biennium, preventing the combination of the two periods for budget and resource mobilization comparisons. Focusing on 2022-2023 allows for an analysis of the latest trends in funding gaps. For more nuanced analysis (including linking results to resources), there is a need to refine the setting of targets based on a more rigorous costing methodology. When looking at the data presented, it is important to take into consideration the following: for outputs that exceeded funding targets, higher country demand aligned with donor priorities, among other factors; for outputs that did not meet their targets, several factors may have impacted results, such as shifting donor priorities, insufficient visibility of UNESCO's comparative advantage, etc. In addition, both within under-funded and well-funded outputs, there are nuances due to the tight earmarking of resources leading to certain activities receiving sufficient funds, while others are experiencing sometimes severe funding gaps.
- **The Longitudinal Challenge:** Another challenge in results reporting was measuring the long-term impacts of UNESCO's initiatives. Development changes often take time to manifest, making it difficult to capture the

full scope of an initiative's effectiveness within a four-year reporting cycle. This will require innovative approaches and more extended evaluation periods in the future to better record the wider impact of programmes.

STRATEGIC RESULTS REPORT 2024

Strategic Objective 1

Investing in education to transform lives



Outcome 1: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



Outcome 2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation



Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction



Outcome 4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology, and innovation



Outcome 5: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions



Outcome 6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information



Outcome 7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes



Outcome 8: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age



Outcome 9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies & digital transformation

Strategic Objective 2

Reconciling humanity with nature

Strategic Objective 3

Building just, inclusive and peaceful societies

Strategic Objective 4

Fostering innovation and technology at the service of humanity

Strategic Objective

1

Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital era

The Future Is Education

22. Amid the global learning crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO emerged as a leader in education, providing critical guidance and innovative solutions. With 1.6 billion learners out of school at the peak of the pandemic, UNESCO supported countries in transforming their education systems. Today, the world is still recovering: 250 million children remain out of school, and 70% of 10-year-olds cannot read a basic text, up from 57% pre-pandemic.² UNESCO swiftly generated crucial evidence, convened partners, advocated for continued investment, and provided policy guidance to ensure learning continuity and address deepening inequalities. Strengthening partnerships and fostering solidarity, the Global Education Coalition, with 175 members, mobilized diverse stakeholders to minimize learning disruptions. UNESCO's advocacy campaigns reached millions, emphasizing the importance of girls' continued education during and after the crisis.

23. Over the past four years, UNESCO has supported education systems in 177 countries, including 133 crisis-affected and disaster-prone countries, becoming a notable education player at country level. In parallel, UNESCO also led a comprehensive overhaul of the global education architecture, elevating education to the highest levels of the global agenda. The establishment of the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC) and the Multilateral Education Platform (MEP) in 2019 underscored this effort. In October 2020, UNESCO convened 100 Member States, including 14 Heads of State and government and 68 Ministers and Vice-Ministers, in an extraordinary Global Education Meeting to safeguard education amid the pandemic, catalysing a global response and setting the stage for future recovery initiatives.

24. These efforts helped pave the way for the 2022 Transforming Education Summit (TES), and its pre-summit in Paris, which helped to reignite the sense of urgency around SDG 4. Leading up to the summit, 163 Member States convened national consultations, and some 143 countries submitted national statements of commitment to transform their education systems and invest in education. In addition to paving the way for the TES, UNESCO's efforts to strengthen the global education architecture have also anticipated the structure that would be needed to lead effective follow-up efforts and chart the path towards 2030 and beyond. Crucially, through the SDG 4 HLSC and the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report, UNESCO has driven advocacy on education financing, fostering regular dialogue between Ministers of Education and Finance and launching the Multilateral Financing of Education Initiative as part of the New Financing Pact. This has been crucial in maintaining momentum for education investment and ensuring continued progress towards SDG 4.

25. In 2022, UNESCO also led a full-fledged process to advance education within a lifelong learning perspective, driven by three milestone international conferences on early childhood care, higher education and adult learning. In 2023, the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education entered into force, now ratified by 30 countries representing over 25% of the world's internationally mobile students. UNESCO also introduced a new Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development, adopted unanimously by 194 Member States following consultations with over 3,000 experts from 130 countries.

26. UNESCO's thought leadership has shaped the global education agenda through key reports such as the *Futures of Education* report and the *Global Education Monitoring Reports*. These reports have informed national consultations in over 100 countries and have been among UNESCO's top publications, translated into multiple languages. Flexible funding from Norway and Sweden facilitated strategic and coherent investments, enabling more agile responses in emergency situations.

27. Looking ahead, UNESCO is entering the next programming period with strong positioning and trust, along with an expanding portfolio of country support. While the challenges are steep – and exacerbated by a global annual education financing gap of nearly \$100 billion – with the continued backing of its Member States, UNESCO is well-equipped to transform education and place it at the heart of SDG transitions.

² The data points referenced are from: UNESCO. (2020). COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response. [UNESCO Report](#); UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2023). Global Education Monitoring Report. [UIS Data](#); World Bank. (2022). Learning Poverty: Global Estimate and Projections. [World Bank Report](#).



Outcome 1: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Millions of Empowered Learners



THE NUMBERS*

UNESCO's work is unlocking the potential of millions of learners by facilitating access to inclusive and equitable education for people of all ages, gender and origin.

46 million

learners have increased access to quality gender-transformative education.

42.5 million

beneficiaries** in 133 countries affected by conflict and disaster supported by UNESCO.

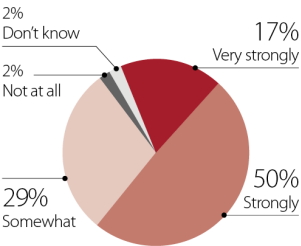
850,000 teachers

trained and better equipped to prepare learners for the future.

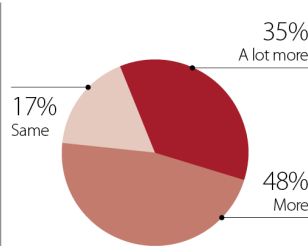


MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 1 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 1 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“ [At UNESCO]... we were introduced to inspiring Brazilian women like the astrophysicist Eliade Lima, whose life stories and overcoming challenges were very similar to mine, that I felt motivated to choose a course in exact sciences... I could see people, women, who were shining in exact sciences.”

Tainá Caldes, an Engineering student in Brazil participating in UNESCO's #EDUCASTEM2030.



THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget***
\$539.4 million spent

Voluntary contributions
\$551.3 million mobilized

* Figures cited mostly cover the 2022-2023 reporting period, reflecting the 41 C/5 Programme and Budget Results Framework.
** Beneficiaries include learners, teachers, education personnel and officials, and caregivers
*** Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

At a time when multilateralism has been strained, UNESCO was able to bring the international community together around ambitious new norms and standards for education.

28. **UNESCO's New Recommendation on Education for Peace Endorsed by 194 Member States.** UNESCO's new Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development has been endorsed by 194 Member States, following consultations with over 3,000 experts from 130 countries. This updated recommendation, a revision of the 1974 version, marks a significant step toward enhancing education's role in fostering peace, human rights, and sustainable development, contributing to a more peaceful and sustainable world.

29. **Global Convention for Higher Education Qualifications Boosts Student Mobility.** The Global Convention for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications marks a significant shift in facilitating higher education mobility for millions of students worldwide. With 30 States Parties joining, this agreement enhances access to educational opportunities for nearly a quarter of the internationally mobile student population. Amidst a rapidly evolving higher education landscape, student enrolment has surged to over 250 million, up from 100 million in 2000.³ Student mobility has also increased threefold in the last two decades, with over 6 million learners now studying abroad, half of them outside of their region.

30. **Over 140 Countries Commit to Lifelong Learning at CONFINTEA⁴ VII.** At CONFINTEA VII, over 140 countries committed to lifelong learning, addressing contemporary challenges like sustainability and rapid technological change. By adopting the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA), Member States secured high-level political commitment to empower adults to adapt, participate in society, and contribute to sustainable development.

31. **175 Million Children Stand to Benefit⁵ from the Global Commitment to Early Childhood Care and Education.** Through the adoption of the 2022 Tashkent Declaration by 147 UNESCO Member States, the potential of 175 million young children worldwide stands to benefit from a renewed commitment to early childhood care and education (ECCE). With current enrolment rates as low as 50% in some regions, the Declaration aims to prioritize universal access to quality ECCE and increase financing to bridge this gap.

³ UNESCO. (2021). Global Education Monitoring Report.

⁴ International Conference on Adult Education, organised by UNESCO every 12 years since 1949

⁵ Ibid.

With UNESCO's support, countries are translating the right to education into legislative and policy changes at country level.

↳ **110 countries, including 6 over the past 4 years**, have now ratified UNESCO's 1960 Convention Against Discrimination in Education.

↳ **18 additional countries** are developing ratification plans for the 1960 Convention.

↳ **32 countries** reviewed their laws over the past four years, introducing specific right to education related amendments.

32. UNESCO's Advocacy Increases Member States Reporting to the 1960 Education Convention by 22%.

UNESCO's advocacy efforts surrounding the 1960 Convention Against Discrimination in Education have led to a 22% increase in Member State reporting, significantly catalysed by the 60th anniversary campaign. The Convention, a powerful tool for promoting inclusive and equitable education, has now been ratified by 110 countries. UNESCO is providing tailored support to an additional 18 countries to move toward ratification. UNESCO's direct technical support, including the roll-out of guidelines to strengthen the right to education within a lifelong learning perspective, has been pivotal. UNESCO's monitoring efforts, which include regular updates to UN bodies, have influenced policies and advanced educational rights. These actions highlight UNESCO's significant global impact in promoting and safeguarding the right to education for all.

33. UNESCO Strengthens Education Rights in 32 Countries Through Policy Reviews and Global Guidelines. In

32 countries, UNESCO's efforts have made a tangible impact on education rights through comprehensive policy reviews of legal and policy frameworks. Reports like *The Right to Education of Minorities* and *Learning at Risk*, launched at COP28, have further bolstered efforts to protect the rights of vulnerable populations.



What Impact has the 1960 Convention had at National Level?

The results of the tenth consultation on the Convention published in 2022⁶ demonstrates significant progress, but challenges still persist – and the Convention still needs to achieve universal ratification:

- Since the seventh consultation (2007), there has been a 47% increase in state reporting.
- 86% of Member States prohibit discrimination in education in their constitution or legislation.
- The provisions of the Convention have been invoked by courts, tribunals and/or administrative authorities in 22% of Member States.
- 85% of Member States have established minimum norms and standards to ensure quality education.
- 54% of Member States have reported taking measures to strengthen the social status and attractiveness of the teaching profession.
- Higher education is accessible through financial incentives and scholarships in 79% of reporting Member States and is free in 33% of Member States.

⁶ UNESCO. (2022). Tenth Consultation on the Implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education.

With UNESCO's support, countries are able to ensure that learning continues, even during times of crisis and emergencies.

↳ **42.5 million** beneficiaries in 133 countries affected by conflict and disaster supported by UNESCO.

↳ UNESCO's *Literacy for a Brighter Future* campaign reached out to over 20 million Afghans on the right to education.

34. UNESCO Targets 42.5 Million Beneficiaries to Ensure Education Continuity in Crisis-Affected Regions.

UNESCO has positioned education as a key consideration in the humanitarian-development nexus, promoting the continuity of learning and the right to education in crisis-affected and disaster-prone countries. In 2022-2023 alone, UNESCO implemented 320 Education in Emergency initiatives across 133 countries, targeting 42.5 million beneficiaries, including learners, teachers, education personnel, officials, and caregivers. These interventions included rehabilitating educational institutions, providing psychosocial support, offering literacy programmes, and conducting crisis-sensitive planning.

35. UNESCO Provides Over 58,500 Devices and Training in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Support to 15,000 school psychologists in Ukraine.

UNESCO has addressed immediate needs and strengthened the resilience of the education system. Operations included providing over 58,500 devices to teachers and learners to support hybrid and distance learning until in-person education can resume. UNESCO has also led the education sector's work on MHPSS, providing training to 15,000 school psychologists, and establishing 25 Inclusive Resource Centres as safe learning environments, to improve students' mental health and help them withstand the trauma of war. UNESCO also collaborates with 25 Teacher Training Institutions to support teacher professional development.



Empowering Afghan Women Through Education: UNESCO's Lifeline in Crisis

Despite the Taliban's ban on secondary and higher education for females, UNESCO has continued to provide community-based literacy classes, reaching over 40,000 youth and adults, with 50% being women and adolescent girls, across 20 provinces. These classes have empowered women like Bi Bi, a 32-year-old mother of nine, to gain literacy skills that enhance their economic independence and ability to support their children's education.

The *Literacy for a Brighter Future* campaign raised awareness about education rights, reaching over 20 million Afghans. UNESCO's work extends beyond literacy, encompassing teacher training, educational radio programmes, and learning assessment frameworks. This multifaceted approach has been vital in preserving educational opportunities for girls in a challenging environment.

The impact of these efforts is significant, especially when considering the cost of inaction. UNICEF's analysis reveals that denying girls secondary education costs Afghanistan 2.5% of its annual GDP, translating to a loss of at least \$500 million in the last 12 months alone. By continuing to invest in girls' education, UNESCO is not only upholding fundamental rights but also safeguarding Afghanistan's economic future and social progress.

36. **UNESCO Rehabilitates 168 Educational Institutions and Supporting Teacher Development.** In Beirut, Lebanon, following the August 2020 explosions, UNESCO was mandated by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to coordinate all rehabilitation efforts and prioritize needs. UNESCO rehabilitated 145 schools, 20 TVET centres, and three universities, enabling thousands of children and youth, including refugees, to resume learning in safe environments. Concurrently, UNESCO supported distance learning and provided psychosocial support for teachers and learners, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Flexible Funding Empowers UNESCO to Respond Swiftly to Global Educational Emergencies

In the face of global crises, flexible funding from Sweden (since 2018) and Norway (since 2023) has enabled UNESCO to respond swiftly and effectively to educational emergencies worldwide.

With Sweden's initial flexible contributions allowed UNESCO to strengthen its programmatic and human resources, particularly in the Education in Emergencies portfolio. This investment has positioned UNESCO prominently within the global education architecture, including the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding nexus (Triple Nexus), and has enhanced its engagement in global coordination mechanisms and operational initiatives on the ground.

UNESCO's recognized role in the Education in Emergencies field has also attracted additional funding from other key donors such as Education Cannot Wait (ECW), allowing for the implementation of multi-year grants in several countries. Since 2021, unearmarked funds from both Sweden and Norway have been used as seed funding to support UNESCO field offices, aiding 22 countries in preparing for or responding to emergency situations. Although the seed funding is modest, it has been instrumental in enabling UNESCO to provide diverse crisis responses, benefiting educational institutions, learners, and teachers across these countries. A prime example of this approach's effectiveness came in April 2023, following the conflict outbreak in Sudan. UNESCO's Offices in Khartoum and Cairo responded rapidly, with Khartoum leading the coordination of education efforts and initiating a Transitional Education Plan, while Cairo swiftly addressed the needs of displaced learners in Egypt.

This flexible funding model demonstrated the power of trust-based partnerships in international development. By providing unearmarked contributions, Sweden and Norway have empowered UNESCO to make rapid, context-specific decisions that maximize impact where it was needed most.

37. UNESCO Mobilizes Global Financing to Protect Education in Crisis Contexts. UNESCO has mobilized \$450 million to safeguard education in crisis contexts, and leveraged global financing by engaging in global, regional, and national coordination and financing mechanisms. For example, in Afghanistan, the Education Sector Transition Plan Working Group co-chaired by UNESCO developed the relevant Afghanistan Education Sector Support Plans and built consensus to finance the education sector with over \$1.17 billion. This approach strengthened partnerships and bolstered collective efforts to protect education in crisis settings. Through initiatives like the TES's Global Initiative on Partnership for Transformative Actions in Crisis Situations, UNESCO mobilized key stakeholders to address the complex challenges facing Education in Emergencies.



1,500 Children in Gaza reached through UNESCO's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).

In the Gaza Strip, UNESCO has been supporting displaced children and families, helping them cope with the trauma they are enduring. Since February 2024, a total of 1,580 displaced children have received assistance through UNESCO's MHPSS initiatives in shelters across Khan Younis and Rafah in the Southern Gaza Strip, in partnership with the Teacher Creativity Centre (TCC). Additionally, 810 caregivers have participated in psychosocial support workshops, enhancing their capacity to provide support to both themselves and the children in their care.

Stories from those who have benefitted from UNESCO's activities include ten-year-old Dana who found solace in individual counselling sessions, learning coping mechanisms to deal with fear for her father's safety. Eleven-year-old Samira, traumatized by her brother's death, felt comforted while attending MHPSS activities, helping her process emotions and regain a sense of normalcy. Thanks to new financial support from Japan and Iceland, UNESCO is scaling up these crucial MHPSS activities to help more children cope and recover from trauma.

38. **UNESCO Expands Higher Education Opportunities for Refugees with Qualifications Passport.** UNESCO has expanded higher education opportunities for refugees by facilitating the mobility of those with qualifications through the UNESCO Qualifications Passport (UQP). Issued in multiple countries, the UQP has opened doors for countless individuals. To date, over 62 Qualifications Passports have been issued, with more than 30 UQP holders receiving university admission letters.

With UNESCO's support, countries are tackling the root causes of gender gaps in education, through education.

↳ **46 million learners** in 32 countries benefited from increased access to gender transformative education.

↳ **500 million people** reached through the *Keeping Girls in the Picture* media campaign.

↳ New evidence from **140 countries** on overlooked issue of **boys' disengagement from education** catalyses global attention.

39. **UNESCO's Gender Equality Initiatives Benefit 46 Million Learners in 32 Countries.** In 2023 alone, some 46 million learners in 32 countries benefitted from UNESCO's support to strengthen policies, legislation, and strategies on gender equality. These efforts have led to policy revisions and the integration of gender data into educational frameworks. Additionally, 14 countries have adopted or are implementing new policies aimed at creating safe learning environments free from gender-based violence. This work is driving tangible progress toward gender equality in education worldwide.

40. **UNESCO's Campaign Reaches 500 Million People to Keep Girls in School During COVID-19.** UNESCO's grassroots advocacy campaign, bolstered by efforts in remote high-risk communities, successfully reached 500 million people, emphasizing the importance of maintaining girls' access to education during the COVID-19 crisis and ensuring their return to school afterward. Through landmark research, guidance, and advocacy toolkits for youth, UNESCO highlighted the gender-specific impacts of the pandemic, underscoring the critical need for continued education for girls.



UNESCO's Crucial Role in the Global Educational Response to COVID-19.

UNESCO's swift and sustained educational response to COVID-19 was highly relevant for Member States and partners, as evidenced by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service 2023 evaluation. At the pandemic's onset, UNESCO held Ministerial education meetings to coordinate emergency responses and share strategies to minimize learning disruptions. The Global Education Coalition, established in March 2020 with 208 partners, facilitated cross-country initiatives to ensure learning continuity. UNESCO's global monitoring of school closures and teacher vaccinations provided real-time data on COVID-19's impact on education, with interactive maps reaching over 3 million views in 2020. UNESCO, in collaboration with the OECD, UNICEF, and the World Bank, conducted surveys on national education responses and shared resources on various countries' experiences. Joint guidance for reopening schools and prioritizing girls was provided with other UN agencies. UNESCO curated over 100 distance learning resources in more than 50 languages and 470 national learning platforms from 180 countries. Advocacy campaigns like *Learning Never Stops* and *Keeping Girls in the Picture* reached over 400 million people, emphasizing the importance of education during the pandemic.

41. **UNESCO Enhances Teacher Capacities and Improve Girls' Learning Outcomes in 24 Countries.** UNESCO's programmes have enhanced teacher capacities to improve girls' learning outcomes in 24 countries. In Niger, for instance, gender-responsive pedagogies have been integrated into primary-level teacher training, resulting in 7,000 graduates and 2,000 newly trained gender-responsive teachers annually. This initiative has led to improved

learning outcomes for girls, especially in STEM subjects, and increased high school graduation rates for girls from 47.69% in 2019 to 51.55% in 2021-22.

42. **UNESCO’s Report on Boys’ Disengagement from Education Sparks Global Action.** UNESCO’s groundbreaking report on boys’ disengagement from education, drawing evidence from over 140 countries and featured in more than 100 press articles, has catalysed a dedicated consortium to implement its recommendations. By mobilizing stakeholders across nations, UNESCO has brought this often-overlooked issue to the forefront, spurring essential dialogue to address root causes and implement targeted interventions. This effort is contributing to more inclusive and effective education systems worldwide.

43. **UNESCO Raises Global Awareness of School Violence and Bullying, Supports Safe Learning Policies in 28 Countries.** Following a unanimous decision by UNESCO’s Executive Board, 2020 marked the first International Day on Violence and Bullying at School, including Cyberbullying. Building on the influential 2019 report *Behind the Numbers: Ending School Violence and Bullying* UNESCO leveraged this day to galvanize global action. UNESCO’s efforts include co-chairing the Global Working Group on School-Related Gender-Based Violence and leading the Safe to Learn initiative. As part of these efforts, in 2023, UNESCO published a global study on the role of teachers in ensuring safe learning environments, surveying nearly 35,000 teachers in 148 countries. Additionally, UNESCO has supported 28 countries in developing policies to protect students’ right to education and foster safer learning environments. UNESCO has also piloted curricula in seven countries to prevent and address school-related gender-based violence, highlighting its commitment to creating safe educational spaces worldwide.



UNESCO’s HerAtlas Strengthens the Right to Education for Girls and Women.

Many girls and women cannot exercise their right to education due to gender inequality and discriminatory practices. Poverty, early marriage, and gender-based violence are just some of the many reasons behind the high percentage of global female illiteracy and school drop-outs. Strengthening the right of girls and women to quality education is key to eliminate discrimination and to achieve equal rights between genders. This cannot be achieved without solid national legal frameworks that are rights-based, gender-responsive and inclusive.

UNESCO’s first-of-its-kind online tool, HerAtlas, was developed to map the right to education of girls and women. It aims to enhance public knowledge and monitor the status of national constitutions, legislation and regulations related to education rights for girls and women to encourage countries to take action, strengthen their laws and policies, and lead to long term change.

Concrete changes are already evident. The restrictions on rights to education for married, pregnant, and parenting girls have dropped from 4% of countries in 2019 to 2% in 2022, benefiting millions of girls who can now legally attend school regardless of their family status.

With UNESCO's support, learners are empowered with skills tailored for personal, labour market, and societal needs.

↳ **Some 860,000 learners** equipped with TVET and digital skills tailored to contemporary societal needs.

↳ **35 countries** promote gender responsive STEM education.

↳ **390+ million people from 79 countries** supported in their lifelong learning journey through 356 cities of the UNESCO Global Network of learning cities.

44. **UNESCO Equips Some 860,000 Learners with Essential Skills Through Global Skills Academy and TVET Initiatives.** UNESCO's Global Skills Academy and TVET initiatives have equipped 858,898 young people with essential skills across numerous countries. The implementation of the new TVET strategy (2022-2029) has strengthened vocational training systems by building on previous successes, aligning training with labour market needs, and increasing job placements and youth entrepreneurship. UNESCO has monitored global TVET progress, promoted inclusive and sustainable systems, and trained professionals. Strengthened qualification systems have benefited several countries, and the Building Resilience in TVET project has supported planners and managers to enhance their programmes.

45. **UNESCO Empowers 390+ Million People Through Lifelong Learning in 356 UNESCO Learning Cities.** UNESCO is promoting lifelong learning by empowering over 390+ million people living and learning in 356 cities within the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. These cities are recognized for their outstanding efforts in promoting lifelong learning and fostering inclusive and sustainable development. By sharing good practices and enhancing learning opportunities for all residents, these cities inspire others to join the network and advance the global movement for lifelong learning.



UNESCO's BEAR Project Empowers African Youth.

UNESCO's *Better Education for Africa's Rise* (BEAR) project, supported by the Republic of Korea since 2011, has made significant strides in strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems across Africa. The project's second phase (2017-2022) focused on five East African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. Now in its third phase, BEAR has expanded to four West African countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

At the core of BEAR's success are the 59 TVET institutions through targeted capacity-building initiatives for TVET leaders and teachers. By conducting comprehensive Training Needs Assessments (TNAs) and developing specialized training modules, BEAR has effectively addressed critical skills gaps, equipping 1,739 TVET teachers and 1,899 stakeholders with cutting-edge skills.

The ripple effect is pronounced with over 2,049 students, including 1,731 young women, now benefit from revitalized curricula and innovative vocational training. These impressive results come from the collaborative efforts between UNESCO, national governments, and TVET institutions, creating innovative vocational training programmes.

As BEAR continues, the widespread adoption of its curricula and teaching materials is expected to amplify its impact, benefiting an increasing number of TVET institutions, teachers, and learners across the continent, fostering a generation ready to rise and thrive in the global economy.

46. **UNESCO Supports Gender-Responsive STEM Education in 35 Countries.** UNESCO's initiatives have empowered 35 countries to promote gender-responsive STEM education. This effort included engaging STEM

mentors and role models, significantly expanding girls' access to STEM fields. Furthermore, 19 of these countries successfully scaled-up STEM education and developed 21st-century skills for innovation.



UNESCO Empowers Brazilian Girls in STEM with Innovative Education and Community Initiative.

As part of the #EDUCASTEM2030 initiative, UNESCO has been on the front lines, empowering young girls in Brazil with gender-transformative STEM and digital skills. Nearly 400 secondary school teachers and 500 girls in two Brazilian states received specialized training, while 1,300 municipal education officials gained valuable insights. To expand girls' access to STEM programmes and showcase diverse role models, UNESCO created digital educational materials spotlighting inspiring women in STEM, including indigenous individuals.

But the efforts didn't stop there. UNESCO launched Brazil's first solar-powered travelling cinema, CineSolar, to mobilize grassroots support for girls in STEM. This unique initiative has sparked community debates and reached over 14,700 people across the country, hosting 140 sessions in 95 towns, even in remote Amazon regions. With such success, UNESCO is gearing up for the next phase in 2023, aiming to amplify these efforts and reach even more young minds eager to explore the wonders of STEM.

With UNESCO's support, countries are addressing the global teacher crisis, critical for unlocking every learner's potential.

↳ **Some 850,000 teachers** trained and better equipped to prepare learners for the future.

↳ **Some 800,000 teachers** equipped with skills to navigate remote, hybrid and traditional teaching environments through the Global Teacher Campus.

↳ **First Global Report on Teachers** draws attention to 44 million teacher gap to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030.

47. **UNESCO's Groundbreaking Global Report Highlights Teacher Shortages and Transformation Needs.** UNESCO, in collaboration with the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, published the Global Report on Teachers, the first of its kind and making an impact on education systems worldwide. This comprehensive assessment is aligned with the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession and draws crucial attention to the global teacher shortage and underscores the need to transform the teaching profession. The report aims to ensure every learner is taught by a qualified, motivated, and well-supported teacher, filling a significant gap in the field and driving global educational improvements. Events such as World Teachers' Day and the UNESCO-Hamdan Prize further recognize and support educators, ensuring quality education for all children through skilled teachers.

48. **UNESCO Supports 58 Countries Shape Their Teacher Policies.** UNESCO has influenced teacher policies across 58 countries. Through initiatives like the EU-backed project in the Sahel Region, UNESCO has driven crucial reforms and standards for pre-service teachers. These efforts have enhanced education quality, improved student outcomes, and contributed to achieving SDG 4.

49. **UNESCO Enhances Skills of 850,000 Teachers and Supports 250 Teacher Training Institutions.** UNESCO has significantly enhanced the skills of 850,000 teachers on inclusive, gender-sensitive, and innovative pedagogies while supporting 250 teacher training institutions. This initiative drives global education transformation by upskilling educators and reforming teacher education. UNESCO's efforts are effecting systemic changes that elevate education quality and learning outcomes for millions worldwide, strengthening education systems and building more equitable societies.



The Funding Gap for Teacher Training Leaves Opportunities Unmet.

The global education landscape faces a critical juncture as we strive to achieve SDG 4 - quality education for all. At the heart of the funding gap crisis of \$100 billion, lies an urgent need for 44 million primary and secondary teachers worldwide by 2030. The shortage is particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa, which alone requires 15 million new teachers. To address this deficit, UNESCO projects that financing additional teachers to meet SDG 4 will cost \$120 billion annually by 2030 for new primary and secondary teaching posts' salaries.⁷

This funding shortfall has led to several missed opportunities:

1. Universal access to quality education remains elusive, especially in regions like sub-Saharan Africa.
2. Teacher qualifications have declined since 2000, compromising education quality.
3. Overcrowded classrooms persist, with ratios as high as 58 pupils per trained teacher at the primary level in sub-Saharan Africa.
4. Gender parity in teaching is far from achieved, with fewer than 50% female teachers at the primary level in sub-Saharan Africa.
5. Pre-primary education lags, requiring a tripling of educators in low-income countries.
6. Digital transformation in education is hindered, limiting access to modern learning tools.
7. Teacher retention suffers due to inadequate professional development and poor working conditions.
8. Girls' education and child marriage prevention efforts are hampered, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges, with two-thirds of low and lower-middle-income countries cutting public education spending in 2020. Urgent action is needed to bridge this financing gap and unlock the potential of millions of learners worldwide.

50. **UNESCO Supports Some 800,000 Teachers to Ensure Quality Education During COVID-19 Crisis.** UNESCO supported around 800,000 educators through initiatives like the Global Teacher Campus, which focused on enhancing digital and pedagogical skills. By enabling teachers to effectively navigate various teaching environments amid the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO ensured that quality education remained accessible, especially for vulnerable students. These efforts mitigated the pandemic's long-term impact on global learning outcomes, promoting educational resilience and equity.

With UNESCO's support, countries are delivering better quality education through strengthened governance, planning, monitoring and management.

↳ UNESCO's sector-wide planning support shapes the education of **111 million children and youth**.

↳ **57 countries** reviewed their school curricula to bolster commitments to quality education.

↳ **More than 50 countries** have strengthened their education data and management information systems.

51. **UNESCO Empowers Over 15,000 Education Leaders to Improve the Governance and Management of the Education Sector.** UNESCO has enhanced the capacities of over 15,000 education leaders, promoting inclusive quality learning globally. Through training, these leaders have improved planning, management, governance, and policy implementation, fostering stronger, resilient education systems. This investment in human capital is improving learning outcomes for millions of students. By leveraging partnerships and knowledge-sharing, UNESCO continues to drive positive change, ensuring access to quality education and contributing to sustainable, equitable societies. These efforts have significantly impacted countless lives and paving the way for a brighter future.

⁷ Please see this [link](#) to UNESCO's *Global Report on Teachers* for data references.

52. **UNESCO Helps 50+ Countries Build Robust Education Data and Management Information Systems for Better Governance and Outcomes.** UNESCO's initiatives have enabled over 50 countries to build robust education data systems, equipping governments with essential tools for effective governance, planning, and monitoring of their education sectors. Improved data quality and reliability have facilitated evidence-based policy formulation, allowing countries to identify areas for improvement and allocate resources more efficiently. This approach fosters greater accountability and enhances global education outcomes.



UNESCO Enhances Data-Driven Education Solutions in South Sudan.

In South Sudan, where conflict has disrupted education, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, in leveraging data to grasp educational challenges, oversees the Educational Management Information System (EMIS).

Supported by UNESCO, Education Cannot Wait, NORCAP, and SIDA, the project aims to strengthen South Sudan's EMIS to better address crises' impacts. Through improved data collection and analysis, including teacher training, the initiative seeks to make displaced populations more visible and crisis responses more effective. Despite obstacles, progress has been made in reporting migration data and consolidating education datasets. By empowering stakeholders with actionable insights, the project aims to bridge educational gaps and improve outcomes for vulnerable communities in South Sudan.

53. **UNESCO Supports Curriculum Reform in 57 Countries to Align with Global Standards.** UNESCO has facilitated curriculum review and reform in 57 countries, helping to shape educational frameworks to meet evolving standards and global best practices. Through its field offices and the International Bureau of Education (IBE), UNESCO has enabled countries to adapt to changing needs, resulting in more relevant and effective educational experiences for students worldwide.

54. **UNESCO's IIEP Trains more than 3,200 Professionals, Enhances Education Planning Through 100 tailor-made and project-embedded Courses.** UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) is strengthening the capacities of countries worldwide to effectively analyse, plan, and manage their education systems. IIEP's training programmes spans six key priorities, from improving learning and equity to navigating crises and digital transformation. An impressive 84% of IIEP alumni reported applying their training to their work in 2022. By equipping ministries and institutions with cutting-edge skills and knowledge, IIEP is empowering education leaders to develop resilient, high-quality systems that advance progress towards SDG 4 and ensure no learner is left behind.

With UNESCO's support, countries reached learners with quality, inclusive education for health and well-being⁸.

↳ **21.2 million learners across 41 countries** reached with education for health and well-being.

↳ Over **1.1 million in 9 countries** reached with better health education.

↳ **21 countries** strengthened their school health policy frameworks.

55. **UNESCO Leads Global Education for Health and Well-Being.** Since 2020, UNESCO has solidified its role as a global leader in education for health and well-being. In 2023 alone, UNESCO reached 21.2 million learners across 41 countries with higher quality comprehensive sexuality education, through teachers who were trained or benefited from UNESCO's support. The majority of these learners were impacted by the Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) programme, which benefits 33 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and began its second phase in 2023. As a result of UNESCO's support through this programme, the African Union developed a new Strategy on Education for Health and Well-being, launched in 2023, which will guide continental efforts moving forward.

56. **UNESCO Enhances Health Education for Over 1.1 Million Learners in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.** More than 1.1 million learners across nine Eastern European and Central Asian countries have benefited from improved skills-based HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights education, thanks to the efforts of over 18,000 teachers trained both in-person and online via UNESCO IITE-supported digital learning platform EduHub. In February 2020, UNESCO convened the first-ever international symposium on sexuality education in the digital space, *Switched On*, which informed the development of various digital tools. These include the *Hello Ado* app in West and Central Africa and the AI-powered chatbot *ELI*, which has enabled over 2 million young people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia to access life-saving information about HIV and sexual and reproductive health.

57. **UNESCO Strengthens School Health and Nutrition in 21 Countries.** Through UNESCO's support, 21 countries have strengthened their school health policy frameworks. In 2023, UNESCO also launched the Global Status Report *Ready to Learn and Thrive: School Health and Nutrition Around the World* in collaboration with UN partners.

With UNESCO's support, countries increase investments in sport and promote values, ethics and integrity in sports and physical education, advancing well-being and sustainable development.

↳ **\$20 million loan** leveraged by UNESCO for disability inclusion and gender equality through sport.

↳ **110 Member States** represented in the International Sports Conference (MINEPS VII) to launch the UNESCO's Fit for Life Global Alliance to enhance wellbeing of people around the globe through sports, including youth and women.

↳ **192 countries** agreed to level the playing field and boost sport values, ethics and integrity worldwide by strengthening UNESCO's Anti-Doping Convention.

58. **UNESCO's Fit for Life Alliance Unites Countries, Impacts Millions of Lives Through Sports.** UNESCO's Fit for Life Global Alliance is uniting over 25 countries and various stakeholders to drive social progress through sports. Launched at MINEPS VII, the alliance is making a significant impact by measuring the social impacts and

⁸ This work is programmed under Strategic Objective 3, Outcome 7, but it contributes transversally to several 40-41 C/5 outcomes. To reflect this, education for sustainable development has been reflected under outcome 3, education for health and well-being has been reflected under outcome 1, and peace and global citizenship has been reflected under outcome 7.

returns on investments in sports, focusing on physical and mental health, social inclusion, gender equality, youth empowerment, peace-building, education, employment, and environmental sustainability. These efforts aim to increase public and private investments in sports. The alliance empowers women through policy support, for example, the Sports and Gender Game Plan toolkit. It works towards combating violence against women and girls through setting policy standards and capacity development enhancement. Additionally, it provides global data on physical education policies and runs a youth accelerator programme that offers skills development and job opportunities in the sport-for-development sector. Through these innovative initiatives, UNESCO is harnessing the power of sports to effect global change.



UNESCO to Leverage \$20 million Loan for Disability Inclusion and Gender Equality Through Sports.

UNESCO is helping to leverage large scale financing for disability inclusion and gender equality through sport, in partnership with the Development Banks Coalition for Sport and UEFA. Collaborating with UEFA, UNESCO convened governments from seven countries and their national football associations. This strategy is exemplified by the Trampolín project in Chile, which received a \$200,000 grant from the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) and the International Olympic Committee. UNESCO's efforts to achieve the SDGs through sport include generating impact data on disability inclusion and gender equality, highlighted by a projected \$20 million CAF loan to Chile.

59. **Enhanced Anti-Doping Convention Strengthens Sport Integrity in 192 Countries.** The Enhanced Anti-Doping Convention is strengthening sport values, ethics, and integrity with the engagement of 192 governments. UNESCO supports States Parties to meet their commitments by providing tailored support and guidance to enhance their ownership and capacity. At COP9, strategic measures were adopted to increase funding, clarify government roles and responsibilities for effective implementation of the Convention, and apply complementary normative frameworks within the global ecosystem. The monitoring system was refined to meet agreed compliance targets and customized support was deployed to small island developing States and least developed countries. By reinforcing the Convention's frameworks and mechanisms, UNESCO is levelling the playing field and consolidating the harmonization of the rule of law in sport worldwide, making these frameworks the cornerstone of public international law in sport integrity.

60. **UNESCO Collaborates with States to Embed Values and Integrity in Major Sports Events.** UNESCO is partnering with States Parties to integrate values, ethics, and integrity into the legacy of major sport events. Building on the Concord for National Adhesion/CAN des Quartiers, launched during AFCON (African Cup of Nations) 2023, in Côte d'Ivoire UNESCO is developing a model to create legacies of sport events aligned with the principles of Anti-Doping Convention and the Fit4Life Sports Initiative. In Côte d'Ivoire, this initiative enabled the creation of the National Policy on Ethics, Values, and Integrity of Sport (PEVIS) - the first domestic policy based on the Convention; the reform of the national antidoping ecosystem as well as the strengthening of national capacities to fight the use of prohibited substances in sport and beyond, including drug abuse among youth. UNESCO is offering its expertise to Member States to implement this approach on a broader scale, aiming to establish a new standard. The first regional application will be deployed in ECOWAS countries.



Outcome 2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation

Placing Education on Top of the Global Agenda



THE NUMBERS

UNESCO's thought leadership and advocacy have inspired the world to rethink and transform the future of education.

In 2020-2023

143
countries

commit to transforming education for 1.6 billion learners at the Transforming Education Summit.

A new
SDG4

Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee created as the apex body for global education cooperation.

Education recognized as 1 of the

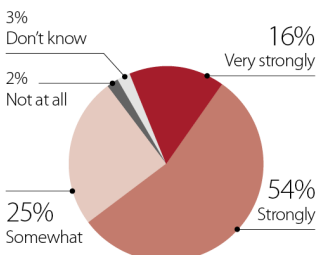
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transitions to deliver on all SDGs.

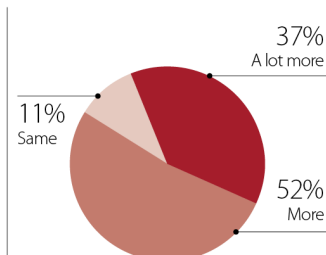


MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 2 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 2 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“UNESCO has an important role to play in visioning and strategizing on what should be the role and purposes of education. [...] As we plan and design education for the future, we must make it adaptable, and we must keep adapting it.”

H.E. Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Chair of the International Commission on the Futures of Education



THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget*
\$132.7
million spent

Voluntary contributions
\$95.1
million mobilized

* Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

UNESCO helped reshape the global education architecture and elevate education to the top of the agenda.

↳ **143 countries** commit to transforming education for 1.6 billion learners at the Transforming Education Summit.

↳ **New SDG 4 Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee** created as the apex body for global education cooperation.

↳ **Education** recognized as one of the six transitions to deliver on all SDGs.

61. **UNESCO Secures Historic Commitment from 143 Countries to Transform Education for 1.6 billion Learners.** UNESCO has secured unprecedented commitments from 143 countries to transform education for 1.6 billion learners worldwide, highlighted by the historic Transforming Education Summit. Shaped by UNESCO, the Summit attracted over 2,000 participants, including 65 Heads of State. UNESCO is now translating these commitments into concrete initiatives, driving reform, fostering collaboration, and ensuring accountability to effect real change in the lives of learners globally.

62. **UNESCO Champions Overhaul of Global Education Architecture.** Over the past four years, UNESCO has spearheaded a comprehensive overhaul of the global education architecture, significantly enhancing international cooperation and partnerships. This transformation began with the establishment of the Multilateral Education Platform (MEP) in 2019, followed by critical Global Education Meetings (GEM). In October 2020, UNESCO convened an extraordinary GEM session with 100 Member States, including 14 Heads of State and government and 68 Ministers and Vice-Ministers, to address the learning crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This landmark event catalysed a global response to safeguard education and laid the groundwork for future recovery initiatives. Subsequent meetings, such as the 2021 GEM, marked a new chapter in international cooperation in education, with the inauguration of the SDG 4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC). This apex body provides leadership for accelerating progress towards SDG 4, demonstrating UNESCO's crucial role in fostering global educational development and collaboration.

63. **UNESCO Advocates Increased Education Investment to Achieve SDG 4.** Through its role as co-chair of the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC), UNESCO has championed more and better multilateral and domestic financing for education, unlocking transformative actions at the country level. Notable achievements include facilitating dialogues between 68 Ministers of Education and Finance on domestic education financing, launching the Multilateral Financing of Education Initiative, and advocating for education funding at the 2023 Paris Summit for a New Financing Pact. By uniting key decision-makers and exploring new financing avenues, UNESCO is driving the investments needed to provide quality education for all, making significant strides toward achieving the critical targets of SDG 4.



Evaluation Demonstrates Relevance of UNESCO's Educational Response to COVID.

UNESCO's swift and sustained educational response to COVID-19 proved highly relevant for Member States and partners, as highlighted in the 2023 evaluation by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service. At the pandemic's onset, UNESCO organized a series of Ministerial education meetings to coordinate an emergency response and share strategies to minimize learning disruptions worldwide. To further mobilize global efforts, the Global Education Coalition was established in March 2020, bringing together 208 multistakeholder partners to support cross-country initiatives and ensure learning continuity. UNESCO led global monitoring of school closures and teachers' vaccinations, providing real-time data on the pandemic's impact on education. The interactive maps, one of UNESCO's most viewed webpages, garnered over 3 million views in 2020. In collaboration with the OECD, UNICEF, and the World Bank, UNESCO conducted surveys on national education responses to COVID-19 school closures and shared countries' various experiences.

Additionally, UNESCO, along with other UN agencies, provided joint guidance for reopening schools and prioritizing girls' education. As part of its clearing-house function, UNESCO curated over 100 distance learning resources, including applications, platforms, and teaching resource packages in more than 50 languages, as well as over 470 national learning platforms and tools from 180 countries. Through advocacy campaigns like Learning Never Stops and Keeping Girls in the Picture, UNESCO prioritized education during the pandemic, reaching over 400 million people and sensitizing the global community.

With UNESCO's support, countries are establishing ambitious national targets for SDG 4 to better monitor progress towards these targets.

↳ **Over 160 countries** now have sex-disaggregated data for at least one SDG 4 indicator.

↳ **80% of countries** set national SDG 4 benchmarks, with first benchmark report released in 2023 (second in 2024) providing critical information on progress, gaps and priorities.

↳ **Three new global education indicators** to track digital learning, greening education, and youth engagement.

64. **80% of Countries Set Novel Benchmarks for SDG 4 with UNESCO's Support.** In a novel process, 80% of countries have set benchmarks for achieving global education targets based on their national plans and policies. These benchmarks aim for completion by 2025 and 2030 across eight SDG 4 indicators. Supported by the UIS and Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, this initiative aligns with the Education 2030 Framework for Action, addressing accountability in long-term targets. So far, 54% of the potential 2025 benchmark values have been submitted. The highest submission rates are for early childhood education participation (72%) and completion rates (65%), while the lowest are for the gender gap in upper secondary completion (36%) and school internet connectivity (32%).

65. **UNESCO Introduces Three New Global Education Indicators to Track Digital Learning, Greening Education, and Youth Engagement.** UNESCO introduced three new global indicators focusing on digital learning, greening education, and youth engagement. These measures enable countries to track progress, identify gaps, and target interventions for holistic education development. UNESCO's data-driven approach promotes evidence-based policymaking and resource allocation, advancing the global education agenda and driving meaningful change for learners worldwide.

66. **Sex-Disaggregated Education Data Now Available for Over 160 Countries.** UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) remains at the forefront of global monitoring for SDG 4. With a commitment to measuring progress on gender parity and equality in education, UIS disseminated sex-disaggregated data for 28 SDG 4

indicators in 2021 alone. Now, over 160 countries have access to sex-disaggregated data, empowering informed decision-making in education policy and practice.

UNESCO is at the forefront of reimagining education and learning through research, foresight, and public debate.

↳ **Over 100 countries** referenced the Futures of Education Report in their TES national statements.

↳ **Defining voice** on global education gaps through Global Education Monitoring Reports, keeping the spotlight on learners.

↳ **UNESCO's 1,000+ University Chairs network in 125 countries** unique in UN system, leading dynamic research collaborations and knowledge exchanges.

67. **UNESCO Engages Over 1 Million Stakeholders to Shape New Vision for Transformative Education.**

UNESCO has mobilized over 1 million stakeholders to help shape a global vision for transformative education, culminating in the landmark “Reimagining Our Futures Together” report launched in 2021. Following a two-year global consultation, the report has become a cornerstone of international education discourse. Led by an International Commission, it sparked vital policy discussions at key events like the UN Transforming Education Summit and CONFINTEA VII. Available in 15 languages, the report continues to influence education research and ranks among UNESCO’s most consulted publications.

68. **UNESCO Publishes Three Major GEM Reports to Track SDG 4 Progress, Garnering Over 450 Media Articles Per Month.**

UNESCO has published three major Global Education Monitoring (GEM) reports, along with multiple policy papers, to track and monitor progress on the SDG 4 framework. These pivotal reports analysed critical issues such as inclusion, the role of non-state actors in education, and the impact of technology on learning. Each report has garnered international recognition and enriched vital global dialogue on education. The impact of these reports is significant, with 450 media articles published per month, over 13,000 GEM report downloads monthly, and over half a million views of UNESCO’s GEM report animations. Additionally, there have been over 500 GEM events, further amplifying the reach and influence of these critical educational insights.

69. **UNESCO's 1,000+ University Chairs Across 125 Countries Drive Transformative Progress Through Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

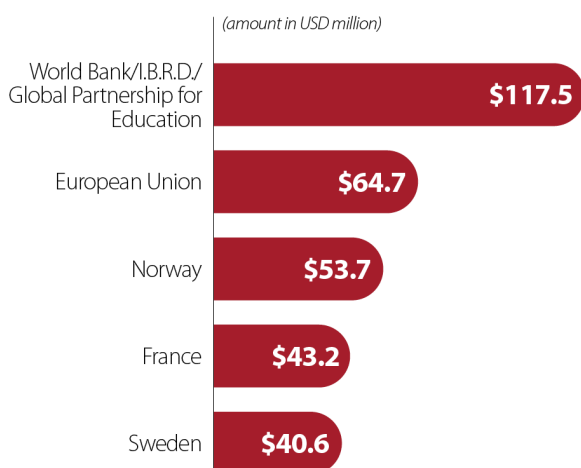
and dynamic knowledge exchange through initiatives like monthly seminars. These diverse scholarly endeavours continue to inform UNESCO publications, guide policy frameworks, and shape major UNESCO-led events. Chairholders on advisory boards and scientific committees were and continue to be pivotal in advancing UNESCO’s mission and global impact.

Strategic Objective 1

Partnerships



TOP 5 DONORS



HIGHLIGHT

Received
\$646.4 million
in voluntary contributions,
41% of total funds mobilized



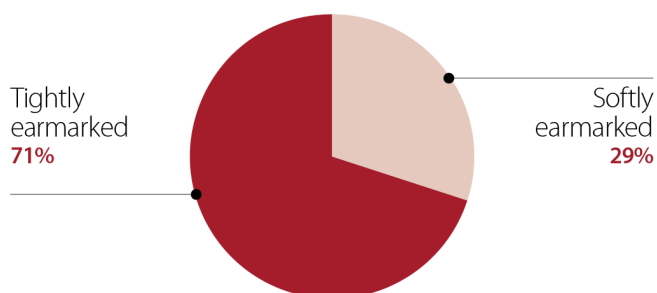
Recognition of UNESCO as a leader in Education reflected by the

20% increase
in resources mobilised

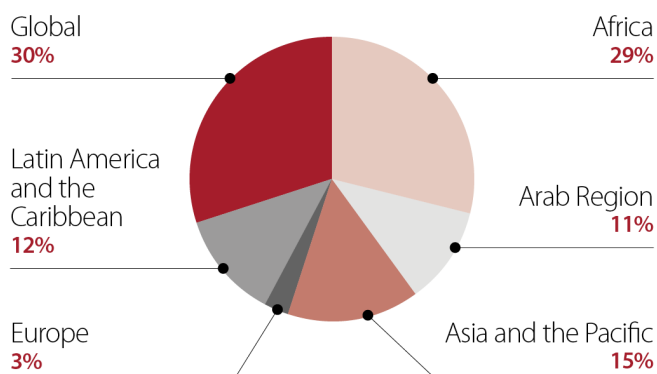


RESOURCES MOBILIZED

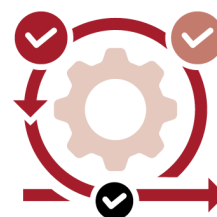
Modality



Beneficiary Regions



Multi-year flexible funding from Norway and Sweden benefited programmatic coherence, agility and emerging needs, especially for crisis response



The **Global Education Coalition** set up in response to COVID-19 has contributed to greater collaboration across stakeholders and resource mobilization

Prominent global processes, such as the **Transforming Education Summit**, can strategically position UNESCO as a partner of choice

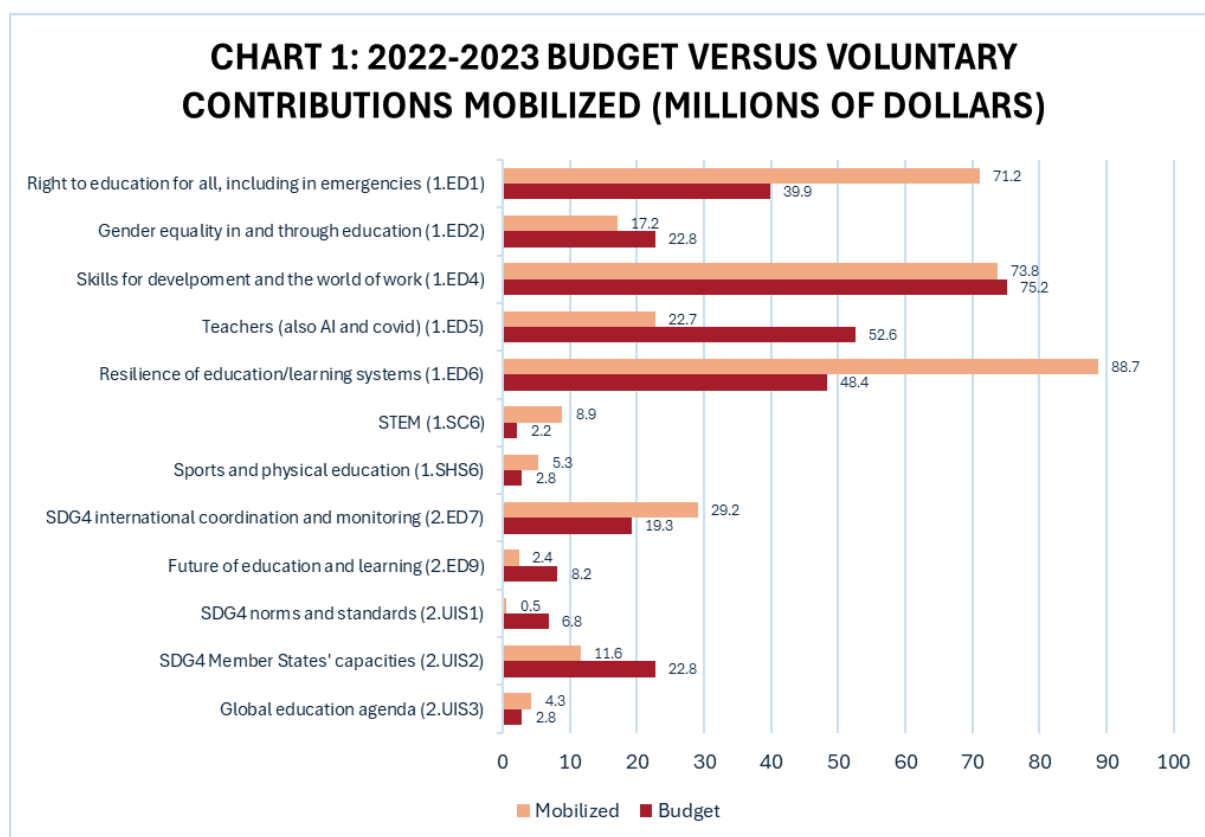


Engagement with the **Global Partnership for Education** has been instrumental for UNESCO to mobilize resources at scale

Funding Gap Analysis for Voluntary Contributions, 2022 – 2023⁹ The Untapped Potential¹⁰

70. During the 2022-2023 period, the resources mobilized for inclusive and resilient education enabled UNESCO to achieve significant results, including in crisis-affected countries. However, an analysis of the voluntary contributions received during this biennium reveals discrepancies between UNESCO's planned budget and the investments made by donors:





- Increased resources will be essential to address the global teacher shortage to allow UNESCO to better support countries in developing teacher policies and providing necessary training.
- Additional resources will be required to fully implement the strategy for gender equality in and through education.
- Voluntary contributions mobilized for sub-Saharan Africa, including the Sahel region, South-East Asia, and conflict-affected countries were higher than budgeted. However, with increasing volatility and prolonged crises, additional support is necessary.
- Funding limitations have also affected UNESCO's core functions such as SDG 4 coordination and monitoring, including the sustainability of the Inter-Agency Secretariat. Additional resources would support Member States in collecting and analysing education-related data, helping to address current gaps in:
 - Monitoring all aspects of progress against SDG 4, particularly in crisis-affected and least developed countries.
 - Sex-disaggregating data to effectively track progress on gender equality in education.
 - Introducing new indicators to understand the impact of digital transformation on education.



⁹ While the SRR covers the period from 2020 to 2023, outputs were revised for the second biennium, making it difficult to combine the two periods for budget and resource mobilization comparisons. The focus on 2022-2023 allows to analyse the latest trends in terms of funding gaps.

¹⁰ Please also refer to the Methodology Section following the Executive Summary for more information on the funding analysis.

Lessons Learned – Strategic Objective 1

 RELEVANCE	 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UNESCO's work on education has become increasingly strategic for key areas of concern across today's education crisis, from severe gaps in inclusion, equity and quality of education to the global teachers' shortage. → Both advocacy and implementation on the ground are critical in ensuring learning continues in crisis situations, where numbers of affected learners are on the rise → UNESCO's expertise and work on education are well aligned with national priorities, as evidenced by high demand from countries. → Education is one of the six SDG transitions critical for SDG acceleration, which is further reinforced by UNESCO's global priorities on Africa and Gender Equality, as well as SIDS and Youth. → Relevance is strengthened through regional and national partnerships, e.g. UNESCO's co-chairing with the AU preparations for 2024 as the "Year of Education". → While we have evidence of the significant positive impact of arts education and sport education in building resilience and social cohesion, these areas remain undervalued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UNESCO's unique education mandate in the UN system (spanning the entire education continuum from early childhood education to lifelong learning) has fostered collaboration and joint programming to achieve impact at scale. → UNESCO specialized expertise and strong reputation within the education community facilitated engagement with education ministries and access to policy-makers. → Leveraging its widely recognized role in education data, and its role as coordinator and custodian of SDG 4 implementation, UNESCO needs to further boost its work and gather more resources to expand data availability and access, as well as reporting on key indicators (e.g., on higher education and digital transformation) and gender disaggregated data. → Given the above and the central role of education in SDG acceleration, UNESCO needs to make its role and expertise more widely known and accessed across government ministries and the UN system.
 CAPACITY TO DELIVER	 SUSTAINABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Leadership in global multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as the Teacher Taskforce, should be leveraged to build common agendas and widen the impact of education work. → The UNESCO field network needs to be strengthened to increase capacity to deliver, which is closely related to the established partnerships with education ministries and other national institutions. → Delivery at greater scale can be achieved through the development of tailored policy tools that support in-country education outcome processes. → Partnerships at country level, especially with civil society and youth networks, have been instrumental to reach communities, and expanding impact in rural and isolated regions. → Translating global norms into country level changes works best when HQ and field offices closely collaborate (as demonstrated by the ratification and monitoring of the 1960 Convention). → The mobilization of additional and diverse voluntary contributions is fundamental to achieve higher impact across the education portfolio. For example, despite the wide recognition that youth and adult literacy are critical, funding gaps are still hampering programming in this area. → Flexible contributions (from Sweden and Norway) have been critical to facilitate work in emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Transitioning training projects to national partners, especially if supported by country-led coordination, can ensure sustainability beyond UNESCO's direct support. → Engagement at the highest political/decision-making level showed how UNESCO can help achieve longer-lasting legacy of projects. Institutional capacity building is time consuming and requires continuity to also be reflected in education ministries' budgets, irrespective of political cycles. → Predictable, multi-year grants, such as the GPE System Capacity Grants, helped ensure sustainability of activities and offer flexibility to adjust according to needs. → Adapting global policy tools to country contexts helped better anchor national education capacities. → Education Sector Analysis and Education Sector Plans need to be developed as genuine policy instruments, and not just as a "precondition" for development aid. → Collaboration with the private sector to support and sustain STEM initiatives has helped enrich education opportunities for students. → Partnerships with private sector and National Commissions helped raise funds for projects in the field, moving towards more sustainable financing approaches.

Strategic Objective

2

Work towards sustainable societies and protecting the environment through the promotion of science, technology, innovation and the natural heritage

Protecting and Leveraging Unique Assets

71. The 2020-2023 period saw significant environmental challenges, with global temperatures rising by approximately 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels and potentially reaching 1.5°C by 2030 if trends continue. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) reported a 68% decline in global wildlife populations since 1970. Humanity's resource use, equating to 1.7 Earths, further stressed the planet's trajectory. Rapid technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence (AI), presented both challenges and opportunities. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) warned that AI could accelerate environmental degradation if not managed properly. Conversely, AI has improved disaster response, with AI-driven early warning systems reducing response times by 30% in some regions.¹¹

72. At the same time, the period saw key environmental agreements, including the Glasgow Climate Pact from COP26 in 2021, which reinforced commitments to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, concluded at COP15 in 2022, set targets to reverse loss of biodiversity such as protecting 30% of land and oceans by 2030 and restore ecosystems. The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement aims to conserve marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Additionally, the legally binding agreement on plastic pollution, reached at the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in 2023, aims to curb plastic waste and promote a circular economy. Against this backdrop, UNESCO emphasized the importance of reconnecting with nature, valuing diverse knowledge systems—from indigenous wisdom to AI—and fostering community engagement in conservation. Through its global network of designated sites, UNESCO created learning places for sustainable development serving as living observatories for climate change adaptation and protecting around 10 million km² of land and marine areas.

73. UNESCO also played a crucial role in promoting science collaboration, investing in science, technology, and innovation, creating synergies with cultural heritage frameworks and enhancing 21st century skills education for future generations. The Organization emphasized the integration of science and policymaking, evidenced by a 15% increase in policy outcomes informed by scientific research between 2015 and 2023. UNESCO generated innovative policy proposals like the Recommendation on Open Science, making science more accessible and inclusive. UNESCO's initiatives on education for sustainable development empowered learners to tackle global challenges. Through policy analysis and benchmark data, such as the *Science Report 2021* and the *Global Ocean Science Report*, UNESCO contributed significant insights to the global agenda for sustainable development.

74. UNESCO is uniquely positioned to support Member States in transitioning to more sustainable development amidst digital transformations. With its robust science mandate and leadership of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (2024-2033), along with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the International Hydrological Programme, its World Heritage Convention and network of designated sites, UNESCO has the tools to make a significant impact. However, to ensure UNESCO's global expertise and initiatives reach countries, especially the most vulnerable, these assets must be adequately resourced. To fulfil its commitments to Global Priority Africa and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), UNESCO especially requires more predictable, flexible, and sustainable resources to deliver on its promises and drive meaningful change.

¹¹ Data comes from the following reports: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2021). *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*; World Wildlife Fund (WWF). (2020). *Living Planet Report 2020*; Global Footprint Network. (2023). *Earth Overshoot Day 2023*. [Global Footprint Network](#); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (2021). *AI and the Environment Report*; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). (2022). *Using AI to Improve Disaster Response*.



Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction

Restoring Biodiversity, Reviving Life



THE NUMBERS

UNESCO is transforming people’s relationship with biodiversity, to halt and reverse its decline, and is strengthening the resilience of societies to the rising risks of natural hazards.

In 2020-2023

UNESCO protects around **10 million km²** of significant land and marine areas, safeguarding nature together with its 275 million inhabitants.

Over **100 million**

occurrence records of 160,000 different marine species recorded through UNESCO’s Ocean Biodiversity Information System, driving action to assess and safeguard our ocean’s health.

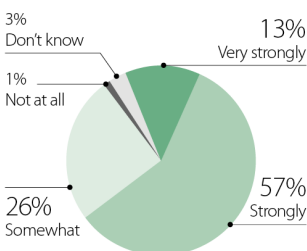
137 countries

advancing education for sustainable development, including 86 countries committed to the Greening Education Partnership on climate action.

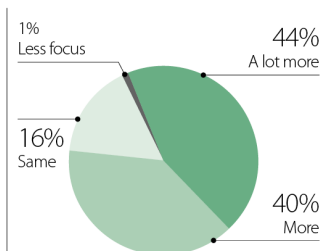


MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 3 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 3 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“The Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development [led by UNESCO] is the only opportunity we have to make sure that people continue to benefit from the Ocean while improving its ecological health.”

Linwood Pendleton, Executive Director of the Ocean Knowledge Action Network. Former Member of Executive Planning Group for the UN Decade of Ocean Sciences and Global Oceans Lead Scientist for WWF



THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget* **\$163 million** spent

Voluntary contributions **\$158.4 million** mobilized

* Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

UNESCO's designated sites provide some of the strongest safeguards for the planet's biodiversity, and act as unique global observatories for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

↳ 10 million km² of land and marine area are under UNESCO designations, conserving nature while engaging diverse stakeholders to become agents of change.

↳ UNESCO's World Heritage sites shelter more than one fifth of mapped global species, of which over 20,000 are threatened.

↳ UNESCO's Global Geoparks in 48 countries protect 800,000 km², benefiting 46 million lives.

75. **UNESCO Protects the Most Significant Ecosystems of the Planet and Supports Ecosystem Restoration Across 10 million km² of Land and Sea, Connecting People and Nature.** UNESCO conserves nature while engaging diverse stakeholders to become change agents for ecosystem restoration. These sites protect globally important biodiversity, implement restoration activities, sharing experiences and showcasing UNESCO's impactful role in global conservation and ecosystem recovery.



UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves Help Implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

UNESCO has significantly contributed to global biodiversity conservation efforts, particularly through its role at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Its network of biosphere reserves, World Heritage sites, and UNESCO Global Geoparks serves as practical examples of integrating local, indigenous, and scientific knowledge and cultural practices into actionable strategies.

UNESCO's emphasis on recognizing the diverse values of nature, including cultural aspects, has established it as an important partner in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Biosphere reserves and natural World Heritage sites are well-placed to aid Member States in contributing to the CBD's Biodiversity Plan for Life on Earth. Some Member States are considering the buffer and transition zones of their biosphere reserves as Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), which are defined by the CBD as areas managed to achieve sustained conservation outcomes.

Biosphere reserves and natural World Heritage sites provide holistic approaches that help Member States implement biodiversity conservation beyond just area-based targets, improving the quality and connectivity of protected areas.

76. UNESCO’s Natural World Heritage Sites Alone Protect an Estimated 1% of Earth’s Surface and 20% of its Globally Mapped Species, acting as vital guardians of our planet’s biodiversity and climate. These areas safeguard an astonishing array of life: one-third of the world’s remaining elephants, tigers, and pandas, along with significant populations of great apes, giraffes, lions, and rhinos. They are also sanctuaries for half of all breeding albatrosses, the most endangered bird family globally. Beyond land, UNESCO protects vast marine ecosystems covering an area twice the size of South Africa. These sites are crucial for climate regulation, harbouring 15% of the world’s “blue carbon” in coastal habitats. On land, forests larger than Germany absorb CO₂ equivalent to half the UK’s annual fossil fuel emissions. In total, these natural wonders represent 8% of protected land, showcasing UNESCO’s impact on conservation. UNESCO World Heritage sites also protect 69 million ha of forests, holding an estimated 13 billion tonnes of carbon in their biomass and soil. These forests are storing approximately 190 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent each year.

77. UNESCO’s Network of designated 748 Biosphere Reserves Drives Biodiversity Protection Worldwide. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves added 66 new reserves and four transboundary sites, with 11 new countries joining the network, bring the total number of biosphere reserves to 748 in 134 countries. Two hundred and seventy-five (275) million people live in UNESCO’s biosphere reserves, spanning approximately 7,500,000 km² in 134 countries, the world’s largest learning hub for sustainable development. These UNESCO-designated sites address local challenges, serve as vital observatories for monitoring global change, and provide invaluable data for preserving biodiversity and ecosystems. According to new research undertaken in preparation for the 5th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves to be held in Hangzhou, China, in September 2025, biosphere reserves help protect 36% of International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. While protecting some of our most biodiverse areas, biosphere reserves are also places where people live and work. The 275 million people live in biosphere reserves around the world, help us understand and improve the relationship between people and nature every day.



Mountain Gorilla Populations Make a Remarkable Comeback from the Brink of Extinction.

UNESCO protects a large part of the Virunga massif, in DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, under the World Heritage Convention and the Man and the Biosphere programme. It is in this area that some of the last specimens of the mountain gorilla live, a species threatened with extinction through poaching, disease and deforestation.

Thanks to conservation measures involving local communities, the situation is improving. The number of mountain gorillas has increased from 480 in 2010 to 604 in 2022. In total, there are an estimated 1,004 individuals in the Great Lakes region of Africa living in the wild. It is the only great ape whose population is growing.

78. UNESCO Global Geoparks Impact Over 46 Million Lives and 800,000 km² of Land. UNESCO Global Geoparks protect sites of international geological significance and natural beauty, while celebrating the unique relationships between cultures and landscapes. Spread across 48 countries, these 213 sites range from tropical shorelines to glacier-covered mountains, covering over 800,000 km² and home to more than 46 million people. Established in 2015, they are UNESCO’s newest site designation. From 2021 to 2024, UNESCO’s International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) allocated over \$1.1 million to support more than 60 geoscience projects relevant to society and the SDGs. These projects include monitoring Himalayan glaciers, studying historical tsunamis in the Makran region and assessing the impacts of artisanal mining in the Amazon. IGCP projects emphasize capacity building and local involvement, such as hands-on training for sustainable mineral development for early-career geoscientists in small island developing States (SIDS). Over the past four years, IGCP initiatives have engaged over 14,000 participants from, with a significant representation from developing countries, women, and young professionals.

79. UNESCO Engages 50+ Global Companies to Protect World Heritage, Aligning Economy with Biodiversity. From extractive, finance, insurance, and hydropower industries, these companies agreed to treat World Heritage sites as *no-go zones* for harmful development. UNESCO provided guidance to integrate comprehensive World

Heritage policies into corporate Environmental, Social and Governance strategies, enabling businesses to measure and manage environmental and social impacts. Economic activities and preserving the planet's most valuable natural treasures are recognized as the crucial link between economy and biodiversity.

80. **UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves Monitor Climate Change in 62.5% of sites.** A recent UNESCO survey revealed that 65 biosphere reserves are equipped with meteorological and hydrological stations, covering 62.5% of sites. These stations provide crucial data on surface temperatures, atmospheric CO₂, and sea levels, helping to understand climate dynamics and their impacts on ecosystems. This monitoring is vital for combating climate change and protecting our planet. Alarming, 37.5% of reserves reported an increase in extreme weather events over the past decade



UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves Are Contributing to Climate Research.

In the heart of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve is making significant strides in climate research with its unique infrastructure: the Congo Basin's sole operating covariance flux tower, Congoflux.¹² Operated by the University of Ghent in collaboration with UNESCO and the Government of Belgium, this tower serves as a critical scientific instrument in understanding the region's ecological dynamics. The tower meticulously collects data on gas exchange processes between the rainforest canopy and the atmosphere, measuring key variables like carbon dioxide and water vapor fluxes. Contributing to the Integrated Carbon Observation System (ICOS), these measurements provide invaluable insights into the complex interactions within the Congo Basin rainforest, shedding light on its crucial role in the global climate system. This data is not just enhancing our comprehension of these intricate ecological processes but is also vital for climate modelling efforts on both regional and global scales. The knowledge gained from the Yangambi flux tower informs policies and strategies aimed at mitigating climate change impacts and conserving biodiversity in one of the world's most ecologically significant regions. By advancing our understanding of these dynamics, the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve stands out as a beacon of climate research, contributing to the global fight against climate change.

81. **UNESCO Drives Global Policy with Indigenous Wisdom in Over 20 Countries.** UNESCO has harnessed indigenous knowledge through its LINKS programme to drive sustainable development across Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Caribbean SIDS, and Latin America. By integrating indigenous and local knowledge into national and international decision-making, UNESCO has significantly influenced assessments on biodiversity and ecosystems, including invasive species, pollinators, and the sustainable use of wild species. UNESCO's efforts have shaped national adaptation plans in Burkina Faso, Chad, and Niger, and sparked climate adaptation discussions in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania. Knowledge dialogues have been facilitated in Argentina, Guyana, and Peru. Through these initiatives, UNESCO ensures that ancestral wisdom is valued in environmental policymaking globally, regionally, and nationally. The Organization has also played a key role in fostering dialogues between Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and scientists, significantly impacting Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessments. By assisting countries in incorporating IPBES assessments into National Ecosystems Assessments, UNESCO has emphasized the integration of both indigenous and scientific knowledge. This approach has been widely recognized, with countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina praising UNESCO's contributions during international negotiations.

¹² CongoFlux tower measures how the forest and the air above it interact, particularly when it comes to important gases that affect our climate.

UNESCO's support has helped countries be better prepared, be more resilient and build back stronger in times of growing natural hazards.

↳ **51 countries equipped with early warning systems**, making a major contribution to the UN's goals that every person on earth is protected by early warning systems by 2027.

↳ **400,000 pupils and teachers safer and more prepared** in case of natural hazards, through UNESCO assessments of 6,000 buildings and 900 schools.

↳ **UNESCO's AI Innovations** have potential to help more than **5 million people** be better prepared in case of disasters.

82. **UNESCO Enhances Global Disaster Resilience with Early Warning Systems Across 51 Countries.** Aligned with the Secretary General's ambitious *Early Warning System for All* plan to ensure protection for every individual by 2027, UNESCO has taken on a crucial scientific role. It provides global monitoring using satellite technology and sensors, making it a key partner due to its unique capability to handle both meteorological (flood and drought) and geological (tsunami and earthquake) hazards. UNESCO's commitment to community engagement, especially involving civil society, youth, and women, has fostered safer and more inclusive communities globally. This strategy equips current and future generations with essential knowledge for effective disaster preparedness and response. Looking ahead, the Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme by UNESCO aims to prepare all communities at risk of these hazards by 2030.

83. **UNESCO's AI Innovations Potentially Safeguard Over 5 Million People in Case of Disasters.** UNESCO's use of artificial intelligence offers innovative solutions that aid people and policy-makers, particularly in disaster risk reduction. Specifically, UNESCO has implemented a mobile AI chatbot as an early warning system in five East African countries. This tool provides users with alerts, shelter locations, and information on accessing public support, potentially benefiting around 5 million smartphone users. Additionally, in the Dominican Republic, UNESCO has developed AI algorithms to assess the risk to schools and bridges, aiming to protect education for 80,000 students by minimizing disruptions caused by floods and earthquakes.

84. **UNESCO Bolsters Safety for 400,000 Students and Teachers Globally.** As co-chair of the Global Alliance of Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES), UNESCO enhances school infrastructure, curriculum, and emergency planning through its Natural Sciences and Education Sectors. Utilizing the VUSUS (Visual Inspection for defining Safety Upgrading Strategies) risk assessment tool and collaborating with local academic and engineering students, UNESCO has evaluated 6,000 buildings and improved safety at 900 schools across four countries, significantly strengthening resilience and preparedness to protect the future of children.



UNESCO's Building Safety Initiatives Impact Hundreds of Thousands in Earthquake-Prone Regions.

In regions like Latin America and the Caribbean, where rapid urbanization leads to cities filled with self-constructed dwellings, many disaster-related casualties and damages stem from building collapses. Recognizing this, UNESCO has actively supported earthquake-prone countries in enhancing the safety of the built environment. This includes conducting risk-informed policy reviews, building local construction capacities, and raising awareness of seismic risks. For example, in Haiti, UNESCO's efforts have enhanced local capacities for safer buildings across five municipalities, training 200 engineers and 800 masons in resilient construction techniques, benefiting approximately 150,000 people living under the poverty line. Similarly, in Guatemala, over 4,000 individuals, including municipal staff, engineers, and academics, have utilized comprehensive reviews and guidelines developed by UNESCO for building small-scale housing.

With UNESCO's scientific knowledge and cooperation platform, countries are working together to realize a water secure world.

↳ **120 countries** committed to monitoring the percentage of transboundary basin areas within a country with operational arrangement for water cooperation.

↳ **90+ countries** have vital tools and knowledge to secure water for millions.

↳ **51 Ecohydrology Demonstration Sites** in 32 countries pioneering nature-based solutions for water.

85. **UNESCO's Annual Reports Deliver Unique Global Insights on Freshwater Resource Management.**

Through the *United Nations World Water Development Report*, UNESCO on behalf on UN-Water offers a yearly thematic analysis that significantly shapes understanding and policies around the world's freshwater resources. Recent editions have tackled critical issues, including *Water and Climate Change* (2020), *Valuing Water* (2021), *Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible* (2022) and *Partnership and Cooperation* (2023). Each report provides essential guidance and frameworks for sustainable water management globally, contributing to raising awareness among policy-makers and water professionals globally.

86. **UNESCO's Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible Campaign Transforms Global Water Management.**

UNESCO's pioneering *Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible* campaign catalysed actions for more cooperation across countries to safeguard Earth's precious groundwater resources. The campaign, along with the UN-Water Groundwater Summit, has spurred a transformation in global groundwater management. The launch of the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition rallied Member States to prioritize critical groundwater issues. By establishing frameworks for transboundary aquifer management, UNESCO has solidified its role in safeguarding global water security, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

87. **UNESCO and UNECE Secure Endorsement from 120 Member States for Transboundary Water Cooperation Monitoring,**

leading to a significant strengthening of global commitment in this critical area. Member States endorsed monitoring indicator 6.5.2, signalling strong support for enhancing cooperation on the management of shared water resources that cross national boundaries. National and regional levels have also been catalysed to jointly monitor and manage transboundary waters.

88. **UNESCO's 51 Ecohydrology Demonstration Sites in 32 Countries Inspire Global Shift to Nature-based Solutions for Water.**

In 2023, UNESCO expanded its global network of Ecohydrology Demonstration Sites to 51 sites across 32 countries, including 14 new sites. For over two decades, UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) has collaborated with local communities to implement pioneering ecohydrological nature-based water solutions, showcasing how transformative preserving the balance between humanity, water and nature can be for driving sustainable innovation.

89. **UNESCO's Climate Risk Informed Decision Analysis (CRIDA) Spurs Global Adoption of Bottom-Up Climate Resilience in Water Management.**

The CRIDA tool has increasingly gained recognition from major entities like the World Bank and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for its effectiveness in fostering resilient water management through a bottom-up approach. This endorsement has accelerated the tool's implementation across the globe, addressing diverse water resource challenges, supporting policymaking processes, and identifying climate adaptation pathways. To date, CRIDA has been applied in over 25 case studies across 22 countries, significantly impacting global water management strategies and enhancing climate resilience.

90. **UNESCO Pioneers Water Quality Monitoring Innovations in 10 Countries.**

Through promoting cutting-edge approaches, UNESCO has facilitated the deployment of the World Water Quality Portal for operational monitoring in critical regions. This initiative has notably improved water quality monitoring in the Lake Chad

Basin, benefiting five African countries—Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Niger, and Nigeria—and the La Plata Basin in Latin America, encompassing Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. These advancements have significantly enhanced water management practices in these regions, directly impacting multiple countries by providing crucial environmental data and insights.

91. **UNESCO Empowers 30,000 Water Professionals to Champion Sustainable Water Management.** UNESCO has equipped 30,000 water professionals, including water practitioners, water leaders and upcoming leaders, with essential water management knowledge and skills, enabling them to promote sustainable development practices and policies. These professionals are ensuring better water management, catalysing positive change, mobilizing resources, fostering collaboration, and building resilience.

92. **UNESCO Transforms Gender Equality in Global Water Management.** UNESCO drives significant progress in gender equality within the water sector through a comprehensive multi-stakeholder advocacy initiative, knowledge dissemination, and capacity development efforts. The UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) spearheads a Multi-Stakeholder Coalition aimed at accelerating gender equality in water. This coalition, comprising 24 Member States and over 160 members from government offices, UN agencies, NGOs, academia, the private sector, and civil society, is forging long-term partnerships, prioritizing collective actions, and committing to voluntary initiatives to close the persistent gender gap in water by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development deadline. Specifically WWAP has created a robust water and gender framework to advance Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 6. This framework includes the WWAP Toolkit for collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated water data, capacity-building activities, field projects, and extensive advocacy campaigns. These efforts collectively aim to achieve transformative impact by addressing gender disparities in water access and management, ensuring inclusive and equitable water governance, and fostering sustainable development through gender-responsive approaches.

With UNESCO's support, countries are improving their understanding of the changing ocean and are better equipped to manage it sustainably.

↳ **126 of countries** engaged in marine spatial planning, doubling from 61 in 1997.

↳ **Over 100 million occurrence records** representing 160,000 marine species accessible through UNESCO's Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS).

↳ **35 essential ocean variables** tracked through UNESCO's "Gold Standard" Global Ocean Observation System, providing key ocean data.

93. **UNESCO's Marine Spatial Planning Initiative Doubles Global Adoption.** UNESCO has supported 126 countries to embrace Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), doubling global participation through the MSP Global Initiative. By providing technical support to over 10,000 participants from more than 100 countries, UNESCO's efforts have significantly expanded MSP adoption. As a result, the number of countries engaged in MSP grew from 61 in 2017 to 126 in 2023, following the IOC's strategy to enhance technical support and promote sustainable ocean management.

94. **UNESCO's Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) Integrates 100 Million Records to Drive Ocean Conservation.** UNESCO's OBIS platform integrates over 100 million records of 160,000 marine species, providing essential data for research, management, and public awareness in vital ocean conservation efforts. UNESCO's advocacy has secured ocean biodiversity protection in international agreements, including the groundbreaking BBNJ Agreement. OBIS has also supported initiatives like the UN World Ocean Assessment, driving global action to assess and safeguard the health of our oceans.

95. **UNESCO's IOC Tracks 35 Key Ocean Variables for Climate and Biodiversity Impact.** UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) spearheads global ocean monitoring through the Global Ocean Observation System (GOOS), which tracks 35 essential ocean variables. This data is vital for understanding

ocean processes and human impacts, enhancing weather and climate models to predict extreme events. The information also supports the creation of marine protected areas and monitors biodiversity changes, guiding sustainable ocean planning worldwide. UNESCO's leadership in this initiative is crucial for advancing climate action, disaster risk reduction, and biodiversity conservation.

96. **UNESCO Unites Global Efforts to Combat Ocean Acidification.** UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission has united global institutions to tackle ocean acidification, emphasizing the ocean's crucial role in climate regulation. Through initiatives like the Integrated Ocean Carbon Research (IOC-R) and the Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability (OARS), the IOC has fostered collaboration among UN agencies, developed innovative solutions, and mobilized stakeholders. These efforts have led to significant advancements in mitigating impacts, promoting sustainability, safeguarding ocean health, and protecting communities reliant on ocean resources. UNESCO's leadership is driving meaningful action towards a more sustainable and resilient global response.

97. **UNESCO Enhances Tsunami Resilience for 22 Countries Worldwide.** UNESCO has significantly enhanced global tsunami preparedness and resilience through its IOC regional Tsunami Warning and Mitigation Systems. These systems provided critical early warnings across multiple ocean basins, potentially saving countless lives. The expansion of the water, including 12 Small Island Developing States (SIDS), marked a substantial improvement in coastal community preparedness. This growth, supported by intensified training, education, and exercises, has led to increased awareness, improved emergency response capabilities, and more robust disaster mitigation strategies in vulnerable coastal areas worldwide.

UNESCO empowers learners to tackle climate change and promote sustainable development.¹³

↳ **161 countries commit to Education for Sustainable Development** and recognize the critical role of education for addressing climate change.

↳ **34,000 students worldwide** already participated in ocean literacy programmes, with numbers continuously rising.

↳ **64 UNESCO designated sites** serve as unique laboratories for innovative environmental education in 44 countries.

98. **137 Countries Are Translating their Commitment into Action to Advancing Education for Sustainable Development,** building upon the Commitment of 161 Countries at the 2021 World Conference on ESD in Berlin. The Conference brought together 2,800 education and environment stakeholders from these 161 countries, including over 70 ministers and vice-ministers which resulted in the adoption of the Berlin Declaration on the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). More than 100 countries are in the process of developing their ESD for 2030 country initiatives, including 20 countries that have finalized and successfully launched their country initiatives. 44 countries are spearheading education for sustainable development using 64 UNESCO designated sites for implementing innovative environmental education.

99. **45 Countries Endorse Declaration on Education and Climate Change at COP28.** UNESCO's work on greening education and education for sustainable development helped to bring about the COP28 Declaration on the common agenda on education and climate change. The declaration has been endorsed by 45 countries to date, attesting to UNESCO's ability to bringing education and environment ministries together for climate actions. In collaboration with the COP28 Presidency of United Arab Emirates, UNESCO also ensured that education was prominently highlighted at the Conference, including through over 200 sessions at the Greening Education Hub.

100. **UNESCO Prepares Learners for Climate Action.** UNESCO is committed to making every learner climate ready. 86 countries and over 1,300 organizations are collaborating under the framework of the Greening Education Partnership. As part of these efforts, UNESCO co-developed Greening Curriculum Guidance on

¹³ This work is programmed under Strategic Objective 3, Outcome 7, but it contributes transversally to several 40-41 C/5 outcomes. To reflect this, education for sustainable development has been reflected under outcome 3, education for health and well-being has been reflected under outcome 1, and peace and global citizenship has been reflected under outcome 7.

learning outcomes together with young people, based on the consultation in 2022 which engaged over 17,000 young people and led to the launch of the *Youth Demand for Climate Change Education* initiative at COP27. UNESCO is also spearheading the development of a Green School Quality Standard to create a global minimum standard on what it means to be a green school.



UNESCO Rallies 34,000 Students for Ocean Literacy.

UNESCO-IOC's Ocean Literacy Dialogues, part of the UN Ocean Decade's "Ocean Literacy with All" programme, have successfully expanded discussions on ocean literacy across various sectors, cultures, and regions. From 2022 to 2023, events in Portugal, Brazil, Canada, and Tanzania engaged over 25,000 participants. These dialogues have significantly contributed to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.

In partnership with the Prada group, UNESCO-IOC launched the third edition of the SEA BEYOND educational module, focusing on "Ocean and Climate". This module, consisting of five lesson plans, three webinars, and various supporting materials, reached over 34,000 students worldwide. Additionally, the innovative Lagoon Kindergarten project in the Venice Lagoon, part of SEA BEYOND, provided outdoor ocean education for over 200 preschool children from seven schools.

As the project approaches its second edition, UNESCO-IOC aims to expand this initiative to more cities, including those in landlocked regions, to foster responsible blue citizenship on a broader scale.



Outcome 4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation

Making Science Equality a Reality for All



THE NUMBERS

UNESCO is partnering with countries to unlock the potential of science, technology and innovation to address today's interlinked environmental, social and economic challenges.

In 2020-2023

193
Member States

adopted the first ever international standard setting instrument on Open Science in 2021, setting in motion a new open science movement.

30
countries

integrating open science values and principles in their STI systems.

UNESCO's 2021 Science Report achieves

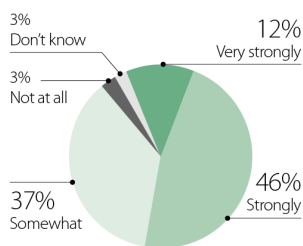
Top 1%
Impact

in the field of research publications.

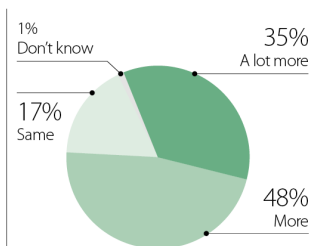


MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 4 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 4 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“ UNESCO’s recommendations on open science are at the top of the scale in terms of significance for the open science movement.”

Sagren Moodley and Daniel Adams, Directors at Dept. of Science and Innovation, Representative of South Africa

“ The UNESCO Science Report is an unbelievably powerful tool... it goes into what the science policy is and what areas they are focusing on.”

Jeff Cutler, President, Sylter Science Inc.



THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget*
\$179
million spent

Voluntary contributions
\$199.4
million mobilized

* Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

With UNESCO's support, countries are making science more transformative, accessible, and transparent.

↳ Over 1,000 women scientists recognized through the L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science Programme, shining a strong light on women's contribution to science.

↳ 30 countries strengthened their STI policies to accelerate SDG progress.

↳ 11 countries have already adopted comprehensive national open science policies.

101. UNESCO Establishes First International Standard for Open Science to Address Global Challenges.

UNESCO has pioneered the first international standard for open science, marking a crucial step in addressing global social, environmental, and economic challenges. Adopted in 2021 by 193 countries, the Recommendation on Open Science ensures scientific knowledge is accessible, inclusive and transparent, and in support of the SDGs. Previously, open science lacked a universal definition, with varying standards. Now, with a common framework, scientific advancement is democratized, becoming a shared resource for tackling the world's most pressing issues. Since the Recommendation's adoption, 11 countries have developed comprehensive open science policies. UNESCO's initiatives have catalysed global collaboration and knowledge-sharing, establishing the Global Open Science Partnership and fostering a more inclusive and collaborative scientific landscape.

102. UNESCO's Open Science Initiatives Transform Policies in 30+ Countries, Accelerating SDG Progress.

UNESCO's commitment to open science has impacted Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policies in over 30 countries. By promoting the principles of accessibility, inclusivity, and transparency in scientific research, UNESCO has helped countries transform their STI frameworks, thereby accelerating progress toward the SDGs. This global push for open science not only democratizes scientific knowledge but also fosters international collaboration, ensuring that advancements in science are shared resources in addressing the world's most pressing challenges.

103. **UNESCO Benchmarks Open Science with Global Study, Reveals Access Disparities.** UNESCO is setting benchmarks for open science through the first global study assessing its status. The report highlights significant disparities in access to open science across regions and disciplines. While more countries are adopting open science practices, inequities in funding, skills, and tools persist. A notable finding is the geographic imbalance in open-access repositories: 85% are located in Western Europe and North America, while Africa and the Arab region account for less than 2% and 3%, respectively. This underscores the urgent need for global efforts to ensure equitable access to open science.

104. **UNESCO's 2021 Science Report Achieves Top 1% Impact among Publications, Making a Major Contribution to Pivoting Science to Sustainability.** The groundbreaking UNESCO Science Report, released every five years, has achieved a research interest score higher than 99% of other published research items, according to a well-known research platform. With over 100 citations on Google Scholar, the report was praised as a "masterpiece" by Lidia Borrell-Damian, Secretary-General of Science Europe, in 2022. Targeting policy-makers, academics, intergovernmental and non-governmental communities, and the media, the report explores how science governance shapes countries' development agendas. The 2021 edition, the seventh in the series, was authored by an independent team of experts using the latest data, often provided by the UNESCO Institute for

Statistics. It revealed that countries of all income levels share a common agenda for transitioning to digital and green economies and is the only global report that includes data on countries' progress towards SDG 9.5.1.

With UNESCO's support, countries' capacities to leverage science, technology and innovation policies for sustainable development are strengthened.

↳ **136 scientists from 21 countries** equipped with entrepreneurship skills to transform research into innovative business ventures.

↳ **180 ICTP researchers from 44 countries produced 2,084 publications** in peer-reviewed journals.

↳ **22,867 science stakeholders from 157 countries** mobilized through 195 ICTP conferences and workshops.

105. **UNESCO Empowers Scientists from 21 Countries to Transform Research into Innovation.** UNESCO's entrepreneurship training initiatives have equipped 136 scientists from 21 countries with the skills to turn their research into innovative ventures and solutions. Many scientists possess excellent research capabilities but lack the knowledge to commercialize their innovative ideas. By fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, UNESCO enables these scientists to bridge the gap, translating their research into practical applications that address global challenges. This support has the potential to drive economic growth and societal progress, underscoring UNESCO's crucial role in advancing international cooperation in STI.



UNESCO Supports Effort to Bridge Africa's Scientific Equipment Gap.

Africa is home to immense scientific talent, yet a severe lack of access to state-of-the-art laboratory equipment hinders its scientific progress. This equipment deficit contributes to a knowledge divide that affects both the continent and global scientific advancements. In 2019, Africa accounted for just 3.5% of global scientific publications (*UNESCO Science Report, 2021*).

The limited access to advanced lab equipment not only stifles innovation but also drives talented African scientists abroad, worsening the brain drain. A significant initiative by UNESCO together with the International Union of Crystallography (IUCr) and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) has begun to address this issue. A laboratory at the University of Lorraine in France provided remote access to a Single Crystal X-ray Diffractometer, benefiting scientists from over 10 African countries. Today, researchers in three African countries utilize this system remotely, with plans for broader access. This initiative highlights the eagerness of African scientists to adopt advanced techniques. UNESCO aims to expand this opportunity, offering access to sophisticated equipment like advanced microscopes. Global support is crucial for this expansion, with scientific institutions, NGOs, and the private sector urged to open their laboratories. This collaborative effort can bridge the scientific gap and drive global innovation.

106. **UNESCO's ICTP Drives Global Scientific Excellence with 2,084 Research Publications in 44 Countries.** The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), a UNESCO Category 1 Institute, is a world-renowned hub for advancing knowledge in the physical and mathematical sciences. In recent years, 180 ICTP researchers from 44 countries have produced 2,084 research publications in highly cited international science journals. Additionally, 195 ICTP conferences and workshops have been attended by 22,867 participants from 157 countries. With a permanent faculty of distinguished scientists, ICTP conducts rigorous, curiosity-driven research in frontier and interdisciplinary science, ranging from string theory and cosmology to quantum computing, climate science, and quantitative life sciences, cementing UNESCO's crucial role in fostering scientific excellence and innovation.

107. L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Programme Increases Nobel Prize Recognition for Women, Honouring Over 1,000 Female Scientists Globally. The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science (FWIS) Programme has empowered over 1,000 women scientists worldwide since 2020, challenging gender biases and inspiring future generations in STEM. By recognizing exceptional women researchers through its international awards and national and regional Young Talents programmes, the initiative has amplified women's contributions to scientific progress. Since its inception in 1998, 15 women Nobel laureates in the sciences have been recognized, with six first honoured by the L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards. This initiative underscores a powerful message of equality and inclusivity in science.

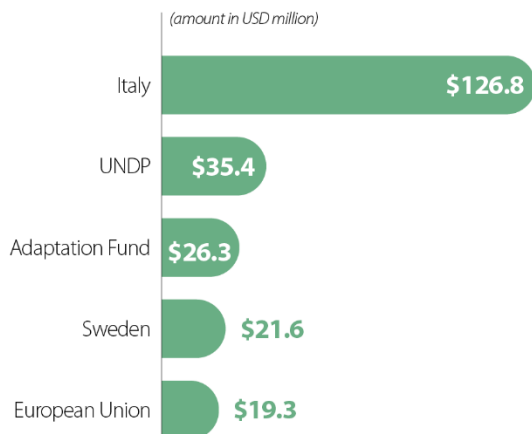
108. UNESCO's Remote Access Programme Supports Scientists in 8 Countries. UNESCO's remote access initiative has equipped scientists from eight countries with the ability to use laboratory equipment without needing physical access to costly facilities. This groundbreaking programme has transformed scientific collaboration and institutional and human capacity building by allowing researchers to conduct experiments and work on projects despite geographical barriers. Testimonials from beneficiaries highlight the programme's significant impact on global scientific research, underscoring UNESCO's crucial role in advancing science worldwide and fostering knowledge exchange among Member States.

Strategic Objective 2

Partnerships

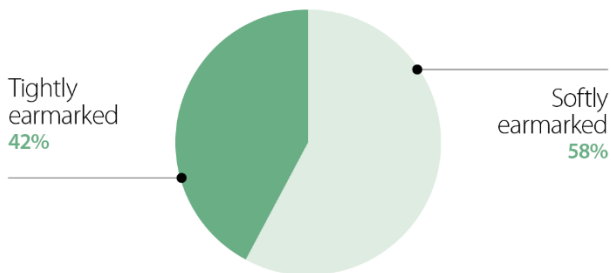


TOP 5 DONORS

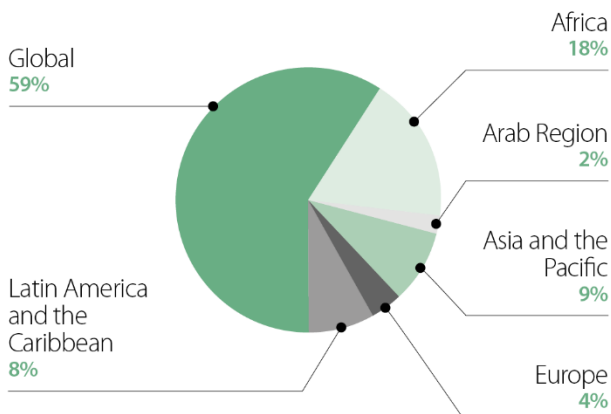


RESOURCES MOBILIZED

Modality



Beneficiary Regions



HIGHLIGHT

Received
\$357.8 million
in voluntary contributions,
23% of total funds mobilized



Significant share from
multilateral and UN sources
(e.g., Global Environment Facility,
Adaptation Fund and European Union)

Italy's predictable funding for the **International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)** is a best practice for category 1 institutes, to be replicated for other institutes



UNESCO has proactively engaged with **UN pooled funds to access new funding**, including by becoming part of their governance mechanisms
(eg. Central African Forest Initiative, Nature Investment Facility)

High interest from
private sector partners

(e.g., \$6.5 million partnership with LVMH Group for biodiversity; \$3 million partnership with PRADA Group for Ocean literacy)



NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee collaborates with

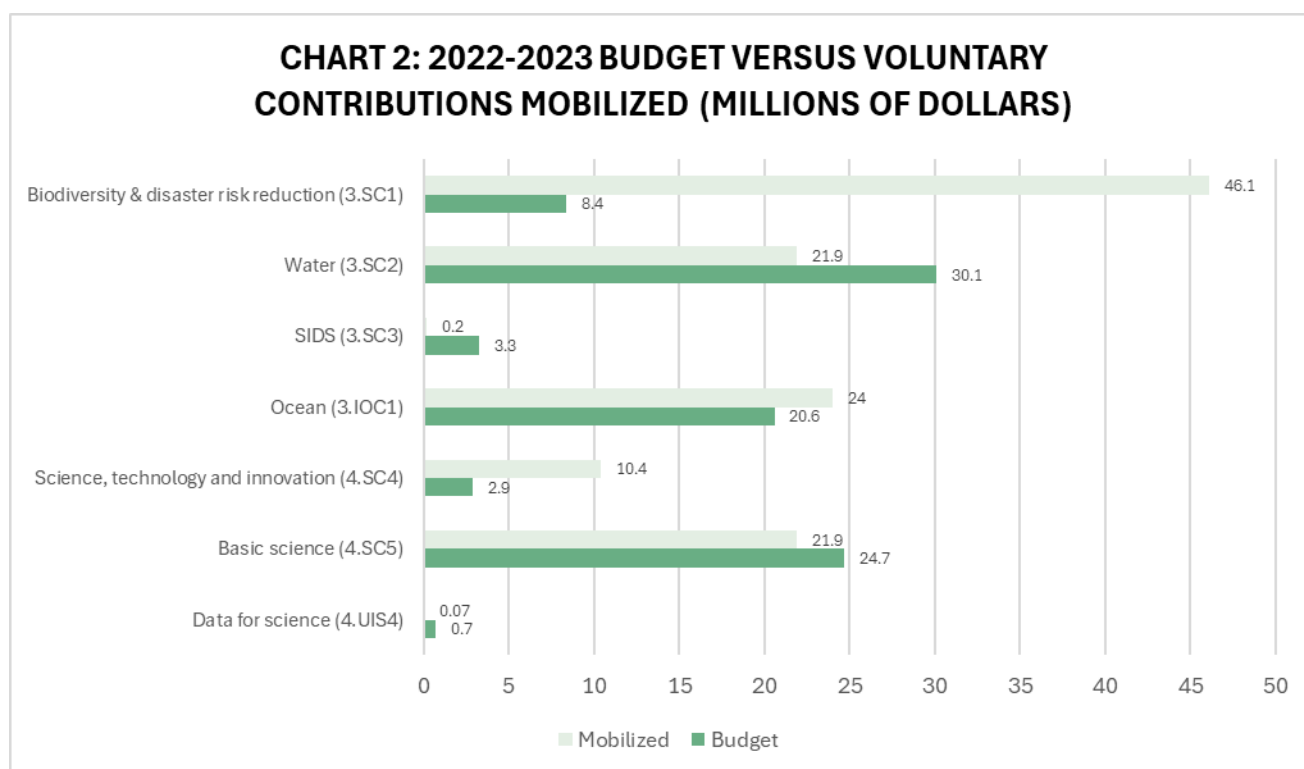
IOC to enhance NGO engagement for Ocean Decade



Funding Gap Analysis for Voluntary Contributions, 2022 – 2023¹⁴ The Untapped Potential¹⁵

109. UNESCO's objective to counter the impacts of climate change, protecting the environment, and leveraging innovation and natural heritage has achieved most of its budget aspirations. Nevertheless, despite mobilizing in some cases more resources than initially budgeted, demands from the field show additional needs in the following areas:





- Comprehensive climate adaptation measures and resilience building in affected communities in vulnerable regions, such as Africa, SIDS and LDCs, were underfunded.
- Initiatives to leverage AI and innovative technologies for disaster risk reduction remained underfunded.
- The Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems programme will require longer-term partnerships and more sustained funding to leverage indigenous solutions to better address the impacts of climate change.
- IOC achieved its initial budget target primarily through project-based and highly earmarked contributions. This reliance affects the sustainability of its basic infrastructures and business continuity, leaving some IOC functions underfunded, such as policy assessment, information dissemination, and capacity development.
- Despite the significant momentum gained by the International Geosciences and Geoparks programme, its sustainability will depend on securing long-term and unearmarked resources, which have been more challenging to mobilize.



¹⁴ While the SRR covers the period from 2020 to 2023, outputs were revised for the second biennium, making it difficult to combine the two periods for budget and resource mobilization comparisons. The focus on 2022-2023 allows to analyse the latest trends in terms of funding gaps.

¹⁵ Please also refer to the Methodology Section following the Executive Summary for more information on the funding analysis.

Lessons Learned – Strategic Objective 2

 RELEVANCE	 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE
<p>The complex and multi-faceted impacts of climate change on society continued to require UNESCO's multidisciplinary knowledge for advocacy, informed decision-making, and monitoring, to which UNESCO is positioned to continue through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The IOC's data collection and analysis on ocean acidification to understand the deteriorating state of world's oceans. → Earth sciences. → The large network of sites, as hubs for monitoring biodiversity loss. → LINKS programme to ensure that local and indigenous knowledge is integrated into decision making processes. → The SIDS Operational Strategy, aligned to the unique needs and priorities of SIDS in the context of climate change. → Expertise in strengthening STI systems, which is especially relevant with the increased demands for fair, just, and green transitions. → Water expertise, critical in times of increasing water scarcities, with demonstrated effects on conflicts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → IOC to sustain its work as the only UN body providing specialized knowledge on ocean science, observation, data exchange and services, with over 6 decades of experience. It is the global custodian for monitoring ocean acidification (14.3.1) and the coordination lead of the UN Ocean Decade. → UNESCO should further leverage its site-based networks (i.e., World Heritage sites, biosphere reserves, global geoparks), which provide a unique platform to support community-based safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and substantiate climate action. → UNESCO should continue to leverage its mandate in Earth sciences, operated through IGCP for 50 years. → UNESCO's Indigenous and Local Knowledge team can contribute unique knowledge for climate solutions plus insights gained through culture conventions of climate change → UNESCO's interdisciplinary expertise is critical to implement early warning systems, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation. → UNESCO's water expertise is key to deliver on SDG 6.5.2 and promote transboundary water cooperation, and gender expertise for inclusive and gender responsive water policies.
 CAPACITY TO DELIVER	 SUSTAINABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The capacity of UNESCO's network is exemplified by IOC's Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), capable of mobilizing over 8,600 in-situ observing platforms across 84 countries. → The mobilization of organized community of national experts enabled IOC's tsunami early warning system cover three oceans and two seas. → The strengthening of UNESCO's SIDS section in 2023 was instrumental in designing an operational strategy reflecting the unique priorities of SIDS. → Additional outreach, visibility and resources are required to deploy the IGCP's unique network of Earth scientists, contributing to UNESCO's work on climate change. → Growth in UNESCO's site-based networks, such as biosphere reserves and geoparks, is likely to continue, so stronger focus should be given to safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, requiring resources for administrative needs. → The LINKS programme, has been recognized for its global footprint and influence despite its small budget thanks to UNESCO's capacities to leverage partnerships → The IHP Programme new Phase IX (2022-2029) was able to activate its full network to deliver as one. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The capacity for the Ocean Decade to sustain impact depends on continued and secure financing, and strong engagement at country level, where National Decade Committees can play a role as platforms for national dialogues on ocean science. → Member States need to boost their support for GOOS, especially its Regional Alliances, to overcome the reliance on short-term funding, instead embed itself into the global and national infrastructure and maximize the use of the global science community. Standard-setting instruments in culture will require budgets and programmes. → IGCP over-reliance on funding from one private-public partner (ended in 2024), demonstrates the need for diversified, long-term funding. → Open-source philosophy and integration with major search providers can support longer-term sustainability, as demonstrated by ODIS federation. → The IOC's regional tsunami warning centres requires long-term hosting agreements to ensure the sustainability of the deployed systems. → LINKS programme sustainable design focusing on long-term partnerships and community-led research. IHP is accelerating Open Science implementation through Open Data, Open Learning and Open-Source applications

Strategic Objective

3

Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage

Building the defences of peace

110. Over the reporting period, societies worldwide faced unprecedented strains. The COVID-19 pandemic caused over 6 million deaths globally and severely impacted economies, leading to a projected loss of \$8.5 trillion in global output over 2020-2021.¹⁶ Rising inequalities saw the wealth gap widen, with the top 1% owning nearly 50% of global wealth. Additionally, an increase in armed conflicts had displaced over 84 million people by 2021, contributing to growing polarization both within and between countries. Rapid societal transformations driven by digital technologies have further fuelled a sense of insecurity and exclusion, exacerbated by a surge in misinformation and disinformation that continues to tear at the social fabric of communities.

111. Amid these challenges, culture has emerged as a critical means of relief and coping during times of despair, helping to protect fraying social coherence and reminding us of our shared humanity. However, culture itself has been undergoing significant changes. The arts have been deeply impacted by the pandemic, with a 70% decline in global box office revenues in 2020. Cultural heritage sites are increasingly threatened by climate change, with rising sea levels and extreme weather events posing risks to 30% of World Heritage sites. Digital transformation is reshaping cultural landscapes, and cultural heritage sites are increasingly impacted by conflicts. At the same time, freedom of expression and the free flow of knowledge and information are facing major threats, exacerbated by the digital transformation. The rise in misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech is seriously undermining the ability of societies to deal in open and just ways with large-scale transformations.

112. In a context of fraying social fabric, UNESCO played a crucial role in increasing global understanding of the need to protect culture as a vital element of a globally shared humanity. Through political advocacy such as MONDIACULT, UNESCO worked to illustrate how the power of culture can seed tolerance and reconciliation and can serve as a driver of innovation and creativity for sustainable livelihoods in changing times. As the only UN organization with a culture mandate, UNESCO demonstrated authority in this space. But culture still needs to be recognized more widely as a stand-alone element of the development discourse, crucial for the protection of just and inclusive societies.

113. UNESCO has also been a powerful advocate for inclusion and against racism, discrimination and hatred, leveraging its annual Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination. Through education, UNESCO has promoted intercultural understanding and global citizenship, notably through the new Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. Youth have been driving change via programmes like *Youth As Researchers*. As a strong voice for freedom of expression and media freedom, UNESCO highlighted new threats emerging from today's polarized political landscape, including crackdowns on critical voices and independent media, with 57 journalists killed in 2022 alone. UNESCO also strengthened action to protect safety of scientists. In an increasingly complex global context, UNESCO's multifaceted approach to building inclusive, just and peaceful societies has proven more relevant than ever. By leveraging its unique mandate and comparative advantages, the Organization has made substantial strides in protecting intangible and tangible movable and immovable cultural heritage, history and memory, promoting artistic and scientific freedom and creativity, combatting racism and discrimination, fostering intercultural dialogue, strengthening global citizenship, and defending fundamental rights and freedoms. UNESCO's strategic leadership and normative impact have positioned it as a vital force in shaping a more resilient, inclusive, and peaceful future.

¹⁶ Data cited is taken from: World Health Organization. (2023). *COVID-19 Pandemic Report*. [WHO Report](#); United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2021). *World Economic Situation and Prospects*. [UNDESA Report](#); Credit Suisse. (2020). *Global Wealth Report 2020*; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2020). *Human Cost of Disasters 2000-2019*; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2021). *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2021*; UNESCO. (2021). *Culture in Crisis: Policy guide for a resilient creative sector*. [UNESCO Report](#); UNESCO. (2020). *World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate*. [UNESCO Report](#); UNESCO. (2022). *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*. [UNESCO Report](#); UNESCO. (2022). *Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity*. [UNESCO Report](#).



Outcome 5: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions

Investing in Culture for Resilient and Inclusive Societies



THE NUMBERS

Culture and creativity are the heartbeat of our societies, and we need to help them thrive, now more than ever.

In 2020-2023

150 UNESCO Member States recognize the central role of culture for resilient and inclusive societies at **MONDIACULT 2022.**

1,199
World Heritage sites
from 168 countries protected.

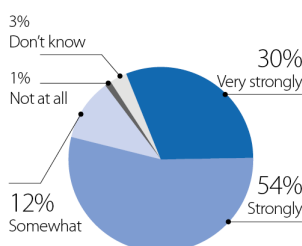
730
intangible cultural heritage elements
from 145 countries safeguarded.

350
global cities members of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network.

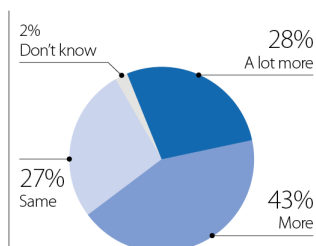


MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 5 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 5 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“Ministers of Culture...from all over the world are meeting here with the intention of achieving a consensus: that, through a new Sustainable Development Goal set out in the 2030 Agenda, SDG 18, the world recognises the enormous power of culture for the development of our peoples and nations.”

Alejandra Frausto Guerrero, Secretary of Culture, Mexico, during her inaugural speech at MONDIACULT 2022



THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget*
\$336.7
million spent

Voluntary contributions
\$232.6
million mobilized

* Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

With UNESCO's support, countries are protecting and promoting the world's common heritage for future generations.

↳ **1,199 sites from 168 countries** are protected as World Heritage through inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

↳ **Africa reached milestone of over 100 sites on List**, an important step towards more universal representation of World Heritage.

↳ **Four World Heritage sites have been removed** from the List of World Heritage in Danger between 2019 and 2023.

114. **UNESCO's World Heritage Convention Protects 1,199 Sites Globally.** UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022, protects 1,199 cultural and natural heritage sites across 168 countries. This convention has been at the forefront of heritage protection, significantly promoting humanity's treasures and transforming the way people value heritage sites. With Tuvalu becoming the 195th State Party, the World Heritage Convention stands as one of the most universally ratified international conventions.

115. **Successful Conservation Efforts Remove Four Sites from UNESCO's World Heritage in Danger List.** From 2019 to 2023, four World Heritage sites have been removed from the UNESCO World Heritage in Danger List, marking a significant achievement in conservation and management. This success underscores the effectiveness of the collaborative efforts by the concerned countries, site managers, partners, and UNESCO. A collective contribution of \$17.5 million, which includes voluntary contributions, the World Heritage Fund, and World Heritage International Assistance, was allocated to properties on the danger list.



UNESCO-led Restoration Brings Buganda Tombs Back to Glory.

The Kasubi Tombs, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Uganda and the burial place of four Buganda kings, suffered a devastating fire in 2010. In 2023, after 13 years on the World Heritage List in Danger, the dedicated efforts by the Ugandan government, local communities, and UNESCO and its partners, led to removal from the danger list as the tombs were successfully restored. UNESCO provided technical assistance and capacity building, collaborating with local craftsmen to preserve traditional knowledge and skills. The restoration process not only revived the physical structure but also rekindled pride and ownership among the local community. The success of the Kasubi Tombs showcases how UNESCO's support can empower countries to safeguard their heritage and mobilize international cooperation, while fostering community and shared responsibility, ensuring that tangible heritage sites remain a source of resilience, unity and innovation for future generations.

116. **UNESCO Enhances Diversity of World Heritage List Reaching 103 African Sites.** The World Heritage List has become more diverse and representative, now including 103 African World Heritage sites. UNESCO has played a crucial role in supporting African countries to strengthen their capacity to protect their heritage. The Organization has improved heritage management effectiveness in 32 African World Heritage properties and

engaged 35 African countries in a new mentorship programme, nurturing the next generation of heritage specialists in Africa.

117. UNESCO Integrates Culture and Heritage into Global Climate Agenda, Strengthening the protection of Sites and Communities. The *Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage*, endorsed by the General Assembly of the Convention, protects World Heritage properties while encouraging adaptation and mitigation actions and fostering community development. UNESCO's comprehensive approach supports biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, sustainable heritage management, and responsible tourism. This pioneering work empowers local communities, creating a model for sustainable development in the face of climate emergencies threatening heritage preservation worldwide.

118. UNESCO's 2001 Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) Convention Gains 14 New Signatories, Reaching 77 Member States. Between 2020 and 2023, UNESCO's 2001 UCH Convention increased its number of Parties, reaching a total of 77 State Parties. UNESCO significantly enhanced policy and legislation in 10 countries. A landmark multilateral underwater archaeological mission in the Mediterranean, involving eight States, was conducted under UNESCO's framework to protect UCH outside territorial waters. The Convention has become a key platform for sharing effective protective measures, best practices and technical expertise. UNESCO recognized 10 best practices in underwater cultural heritage and conducted four Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB) missions to advance international cooperation and archaeological research. The network includes three UNESCO Chairs, a UNITWIN network of 56 universities, 19 accredited NGOs, and one Category II centre, emphasizing the importance of international collaboration in safeguarding underwater cultural heritage.

With UNESCO's support, countries are fighting illicit trafficking and cooperating on cultural property restitution.

↳ **144 countries** strengthened fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property with UNESCO's support to national legislation development.

↳ **World's first immersive virtual reality museum** of a global scale dedicated to stolen cultural objects.

119. UNESCO Promotes Return of Cultural Property and Elevates Art Market Ethics. UNESCO has played a critical role in advocating for and facilitating the return of cultural property to their countries of origin. Leading a global dialogue, UNESCO has strengthened efforts in return and restitution. Following the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration, UNESCO is updating its International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property (originally adopted in 1999) to address modern developments like online trade. By providing updated guidance and promoting enhanced due diligence, UNESCO fosters a more transparent, responsible, and equitable art market that respects cultural heritage and rights.



World's First-ever Virtual Museum in the Making to Spotlight Stolen Cultural Treasures.

In a bid to raise awareness, especially among younger generations, UNESCO is launching the world's first immersive virtual reality museum dedicated to stolen cultural objects. The Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects, designed by Burkinabe architect Francis Kéré, the 2022 Pritzker Architecture Prize winner, is set to open in second half of 2025. The museum will initially showcase around 600 cultural objects, drawing public attention to the critical issue of cultural property theft.

120. UNESCO's 1970 Convention Bolsters Global Fight Against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property. UNESCO's 1970 Convention has significantly advanced the global fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property. Through UNESCO's technical advice and capacity-building support, 144 countries have developed national legislation, strengthening the abilities of government officials, law enforcement, judiciary, and museum professionals to

combat illicit trafficking and review export certificates. Additionally, in alignment with the 2015 Recommendation concerning Museums and Collections, UNESCO has supported the rehabilitation and reconstruction of museums, as well as collection management, inventorization, and digitization efforts in Brazil, Lebanon, Palestine, and Ukraine. These efforts highlight UNESCO’s impactful role in preserving cultural heritage and enhancing international cooperation.

With UNESCO’s support, countries are safeguarding culture in the face of crises and conflicts.

↳ **Over 6,000 military, police, and law enforcement personnel** trained on protection of cultural properties.

↳ **68 countries** benefited from UNESCO’s Heritage Emergency Fund to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response for culture.

↳ **38 cultural sites inscribed on the UNESCO International List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Protection**, majority of which are in countries affected by armed conflict.

121. **UNESCO Trains Over 6,000 Personnel to Protect Cultural Heritage in Conflict Zones.** UNESCO has trained over 6,000 military, police, and law enforcement personnel, including UN peacekeeping staff, on cultural protection through online and regional workshops. This training equips frontline personnel with the knowledge and skills to safeguard cultural heritage during conflicts, preserving the shared history and identity of communities worldwide and ensuring the richness of human civilization is not lost to war.



The Heritage Emergency Fund Has Transformed UNESCO’s Ability to Respond to Crises.

During the reporting period UNESCO’s Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) has supported 68 countries in safeguarding cultural heritage and diversity in crisis. The flexibility of the HEF has significantly enhanced UNESCO’s capacity to rapidly respond to emergencies caused by conflicts, natural hazards, climate disruption, and human-induced hazards. Voluntary contributions totaling \$7.6 million to the Heritage Emergency Fund between 2020-2023 attest to the growing need and international commitment for the protection of culture in emergencies, as well as the confidence partners place in UNESCO to lead global efforts.

122. **36 Countries Enhance Heritage Protection Measures with UNESCO’s Guidance** in line with the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols. In addition, two States Parties ratified the 1954 Hague Convention, one State Party acceded its First Protocol and six States became party to its Second Protocol. This has increased resilience and sustainable actions to safeguard irreplaceable cultural properties during armed conflicts, to minimize devastating losses of cultural properties that form their identity.

123. **UNESCO’s \$125.2 Million Initiatives Rebuild Heritage and Empower Communities in Conflict Zones.** UNESCO’s “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” project has successfully reconstructed emblematic monuments and 124 historic homes, creating 6,000 jobs through a \$114.5 million investment. Additionally, UNESCO has verified damage to 431 sites in Ukraine (as of 28 June 2024) and mobilized \$10.7 million for recovery efforts. The comprehensive engagement and support provided during the ongoing war will inform UNESCO’s actions in other emergency situations. In Afghanistan, UNESCO has been safeguarding cultural heritage, including the World Heritage sites of the Minaret and archaeological remains of Jam and the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley. Emergency support is also being provided to women-led cultural and creative industries in the central highland region, using culture as a tool for women’s empowerment.

124. **UNESCO Champions Artists and Cultural Professionals in Crisis.** Since 2021, the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme has spearheaded international efforts to protect creative voices at risk. Through pioneering research, advocacy, and targeted assistance projects, UNESCO has made tangible impacts on artists' lives worldwide. Collaborating with the Heritage Emergency Fund, the Organization now addresses both tangible and intangible cultural preservation in emergencies, from conflict zones to areas affected by climate change. UNESCO's holistic approach safeguards not only art but also the cultural rights of populations in turmoil. By advocating for artists to be recognized as a vulnerable group needing priority humanitarian aid, UNESCO is reshaping global crisis response and advocating for human creativity and cultural expression.



Heritage Preservation in Yemen: A Driving Force for Youth Empowerment.

UNESCO's Cash for Work initiative in Yemen is creating employment opportunities for youth, while preserving the country's historic cities. During the first phase (2018-2021), over 6,000 young people participated in restoring more than 500 buildings in Sana'a, Shibam, Zabid, and Aden. The second phase (starting in 2022) is expected to create an additional 8,000 jobs.

Fatima, a 24-year-old from Sana'a, found work through the initiative, enabling her to support her family while contributing to the preservation of her country's heritage. She expressed pride in knowing her work will protect these buildings for future generations. UNESCO's efforts in Yemen demonstrate how safeguarding tangible heritage can positively impact local communities, especially youth, by creating employment and engaging them in preserving their cultural heritage. The initiative not only protects Yemen's historic cities but also provides hope during times of crisis.

With UNESCO's support, communities are at the forefront of countries' efforts to safeguard their living heritage.

↳ **183 countries** have ratified 2003 UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, with five new signatories since 2020. **730 living heritage elements from 145 countries** inscribed on UNESCO's intangible heritage lists.

↳ **158 countries** have by now significantly enhanced capacities to safeguard their living heritage.

↳ **Over 3,500 learners from 160 countries** equipped with vital knowledge on living heritage safeguarding for sustainable development.

125. **UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Convention Safeguards Global Cultural Heritage Across 183 Countries.** UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Convention has become a crucial instrument for recognizing, respecting, and safeguarding living heritage worldwide. Ratified by 183 State Parties, the Convention has inscribed 730 elements from 145 countries, fostering cross-border dialogue with 85 multi-national inscriptions from 103 countries. Over its 20-year history, the Convention has broadened the concept of cultural heritage, acknowledging cultural expressions and practices that require proactive safeguarding for future generations. The "Seoul Vision"¹⁷ outlines concrete actions to leverage living heritage in addressing global challenges, such as sustainable livelihoods, climate change, quality education and crisis response. Strengthening synergies with the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO has developed holistic approaches to safeguard both tangible and intangible heritage, emphasizing the interconnectedness of people, nature and culture, as highlighted in the Spirit of Naples' Call for Action.

126. **UNESCO Empowers 158 Countries to Safeguard Living Heritage.** UNESCO's initiatives have enabled 158 countries to significantly enhance their ability to safeguard living heritage, showcasing the Organization's far-reaching influence. With crucial support from UNESCO's category 2 centres, accredited NGOs and UNESCO

¹⁷ Seoul Vision for the Future of Safeguarding Living Heritage for Sustainable Development and Peace.

Chairs, countries are actively safeguarding and promoting their cultural treasure practices for future generations. The 100% submission rate of periodic reports from Europe and the Arab States, 97% from Africa and 87.5% from Latin America and the Caribbean (the Asia Pacific region submits in 2024) underscore the paramount political importance placed on safeguarding intangible heritage. These comprehensive reports serve as a vital source of inspiration for living heritage practitioners globally, fostering a dynamic network of cultural exchange and safeguarding that enriches our collective human experience.

127. **UNESCO Trains 3,500 Learners from 160 Countries in Living Heritage for Sustainable Development.**

UNESCO is training 3,500 learners from 160 countries in living heritage for sustainable development through a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) equipping a new generation of heritage practitioners. By integrating living heritage into key international frameworks and education institutions, UNESCO is enhancing the relevance and transformative power of education globally. Additionally, by setting a guidance note on the economic dimensions of living heritage safeguarding, UNESCO advocates for heritage-sensitive policies that support the livelihoods of communities worldwide.



Living Heritage Provides a Lifeline in the face of COVID-19.

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept the globe and people were forced to live in isolation, communities worldwide turned to their living heritage for resilience. As highlighted through UNESCO's survey *Living Heritage in the face of COVID-19*, from traditional medicine practices to rituals of solidarity and mutual aid, living heritage provided a lifeline for many during the darkest days of the pandemic. In Ecuador, indigenous communities drew on ancestral knowledge to protect their health and well-being. In Lebanon, traditional food preservation techniques ensured food security for vulnerable populations. And in countless communities worldwide, music, dance, and storytelling provided comfort and connection in a time of isolation. UNESCO's work on intangible cultural heritage is reminding us of the wisdom of the past and its importance for the future and for a sense of identity and belonging in increasingly interconnected, yet fractured societies.

With UNESCO's support, countries are unlocking the potential of creativity for sustainable development.

↳ **44 countries** are receiving legislation and policy support to better protect the status of artists.

↳ **15 countries** are addressing the impact of digital technologies on cultural and creative industries.

↳ **60 countries** are addressing global imbalances in cultural trade, lowering barriers for artists to access new markets.

128. **UNESCO Advances Global Recognition for Artists and Cultural Professional in 44 Countries.** UNESCO has contributed to the development of legislation, policies and measures to recognize the status of artists and cultural professionals and establish support systems by facilitating technical and financial assistance, capacity-building, advocacy, monitoring and research through government and NGO-led projects. UNESCO's global consultation on the implementation of the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist every four years has allowed for a mapping of initiatives led by governments, NGOs and INGOs to identify challenges and opportunities, and disseminate good practices to promote positive change in legal and policy landscapes worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the informal and precarious nature of many artists' work, highlighting the urgent need for formal recognition and support.

129. **UNESCO Drives International Reflection and Supports 15 Countries to Modernize Cultural Industries for the Digital Age.** UNESCO shared its expertise and experience to support 15 countries to promote and protect the diversity of cultural expressions in a sometimes-challenging digital environment. Acknowledging the profound changes brought by technology, countries have launched ambitious programmes to equip their creative workforce with essential digital skills. They have also modernized copyright laws to align with the digital age.

New strategies for the cultural industry have been developed, embracing online opportunities while tackling emerging complex issues including in the face of artificial intelligence. At the global level, UNESCO has created an expert group to facilitate knowledge and experience-sharing to feed into effective policy-making.

130. **UNESCO Engages 60 Countries to Address Global Cultural Trade Imbalance, Fostering Good Practice Exchange and Strategic Thinking.** Leveraging UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 60 countries are actively addressing the imbalance in global cultural trade. These countries are enhancing their understanding of the barriers faced by artists from the Global South in accessing international markets and traveling. By sharing experiences in the implementation of measures to facilitate mobility and improve the flow of cultural goods and services from the Global South, they are supporting diversity in global cultural exchange. UNESCO's capacity-building, and advocacy have been instrumental in guiding these efforts to promote cultural diversity and equity in the global market, which will be reinforced through the creation of an intergovernmental expert group tasked with providing strategic recommendations.



UNESCO Report Highlights Untapped Potential of African Film Industry.

UNESCO's 2021 report¹⁸ on the African Film outlined strategic recommendations to help the sector realize its potential to create over 20 million jobs and contribute \$20 billion to Africa's GDP. Despite significant production growth, with Nigeria producing 2,500 films annually, the industry's potential remains largely untapped. The report highlighted that only 44% of African countries have a film commission, and 55% have a film policy. Piracy affects 50-75% of the industry's revenue. Other challenges include education, training, internet connectivity, gender equality, freedom of expression, and archival preservation.

UNESCO's publication aims to guide the African film industry and policy-makers in planning for future growth, aligning with its 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It was released during the African Union's Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage (2021), as part of UNESCO's advocacy for a dynamic creative economy and for renewed reflection on cultural policies to address global challenges. The report also emphasizes that the digitalization of the creative value chain is a significant transformative force.

With UNESCO's support, countries are strengthening the transformative impact of culture as a driver of sustainable development.

↳ **150 UNESCO Member States** called at MONDIACULT for culture to become a stand-alone goal in the development agenda beyond 2030.

↳ **58 countries** now monitor public expenditure data for cultural and natural heritage (SDG 11.4.1) up from 29 in 2020.

↳ **350 global cities** are now members of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network.

131. **150 UNESCO Member States Call for Culture to Become a Stand-Alone Goal of Sustainable Development beyond 2030.** In a landmark agreement at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (MONDIACULT 2022), 150 UNESCO Member States endorsed a common roadmap to strengthen the transformative impact of culture on sustainable development. This unprecedented gathering resulted in the unanimous adoption of a powerful Ministerial Declaration urging the UN to recognize culture as a global public good and integrate it as a specific goal in its own right in the sustainable development agenda prospects post-2030.

¹⁸ UNESCO. (2021). The African Film Industry: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities for Growth.

132. **Countries Monitoring Cultural Contribution Doubles to 58 with UNESCO’s Support.** The number of countries monitoring the contribution of culture doubled from 29 in 2020 to 58 in 2023. Using UNESCO’s cultural indicators for sustainable development, these countries are now sharing data on public expenditure for cultural and natural heritage (SDG 11.4.1). This data collection has been vital for informed decision-making and monitoring of SDG progress. UNESCO’s advocacy and support have been instrumental in equipping countries to compile and utilize this data effectively.

133. **350 Cities from 100 Countries Leverage Culture for Urban Development Through UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network.** Between 2020 and 2023, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network expanded to include 350 cities from 100 countries. This growth allows member cities to share best practices and form partnerships with other UNESCO creative cities, promoting creativity and cultural industries as drivers of urban development. The network’s expansion underscores its importance for cities and local communities worldwide.

With UNESCO’s support, countries are safeguarding and promoting indigenous languages worldwide.

↳ **Detailed records of 1,954 languages** registered in UNESCO’s World Atlas of Languages.

↳ **31 countries** developed multilingual content and access, promoting digital inclusion and bridging digital divides.

↳ **16 Regional and National Action Plans for Indigenous Languages** finalized, with an additional 17 in development.

134. **UNESCO’ World Atlas of Languages Preserves Linguistic Diversity.** Launched in 2021, UNESCO’s World Atlas of Languages (WAL) documents global linguistic diversity, having recorded 1,954 out of 8,324 registered languages to date. Engaging 126 Member States, WAL ensures global participation in language preservation, offering detailed records with 35 descriptors and two indicators per language. Unlike previous efforts, WAL includes all languages, with a special emphasis on signed languages and a redefined understanding of “endangerment and vitality” by considering various contexts. WAL supports informed policymaking, research, and innovation, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing to protect linguistic diversity for future generations.

135. **UNESCO Leads Decade Long Initiative to Promote Indigenous Languages.** During the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), UNESCO is spearheading global efforts to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages. Designated by the UN General Assembly as the lead agency for this initiative, UNESCO collaborates with UNDESA and OHCHR. A Global Task Force, comprising national governments, Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, and UN bodies, provide a new framework for inclusion and multi-stakeholder engagement. By working closely with indigenous communities, the Task Force supports the development of National Action Plans focusing on digital innovation, empowerment, education, biodiversity conservation and cultural heritage preservation.

136. **UNESCO Supports 31 Countries in Safeguarding Indigenous Languages.** UNESCO has played a crucial role in helping countries develop 31 national action plans and 2 regional action plans for indigenous languages, in alignment with the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032). These efforts have led to the finalization of 16 regional and national action plans, with another 17 in progress. By engaging government agencies, civil society, and public-private partners, UNESCO’s initiatives are elevating indigenous languages, preserving cultural heritage, and empowering communities.

137. **UNESCO Advances Multilingual Digital Access in 31 Countries.** UNESCO has supported 31 countries to enhance multilingual access in the digital era by developing multilingual content and systems, thereby facilitating access to online resources in accordance with the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace. These efforts have promoted digital inclusion and bridged

the linguistic divide, allowing more people to participate in the digital world and fostering greater social, economic, and cultural engagement.



UNESCO Sends Memory Disc To Preserve Earth's Cultural Heritage to the Moon.

Recognizing language as vital to human identity, UNESCO and Barrelhand have co-created a “Memory Disc”, a nano-engraved nickel plate set to be launched to the Moon on ispace’s HAKUTO-R Mission 2 RESILIENCE lunar lander towards the end of 2024.

The disc features the UNESCO Constitution’s Preamble in 275 languages, symbolizing global unity and the preservation of linguistic diversity. Engineered with nanofiche technology, the disc is designed to withstand extreme conditions for millions of years. The Memory Disc also includes cultural treasures such as *Le Petit Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and a curated collection of 100 paintings, representing artists from diverse cultural backgrounds and historical epochs. This initiative marks the second year of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) and the release of the World Atlas of Languages, celebrating humanity’s cultural richness and promoting linguistic diversity.



Outcome 6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information

Upholding Freedom of Expression and Access to Information for All

THE NUMBERS

UNESCO is championing safety of journalists and helps protect freedom of expression and access to information for all.

In 2020-2023

144
countries

in 340 media organizations have strengthened their capacity to improve gender equality in media representations.

138
countries

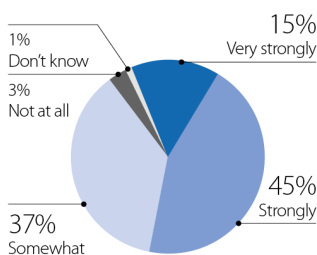
have public access to information laws, including 26 additional during 2020-23.

Over
8,000
journalists,

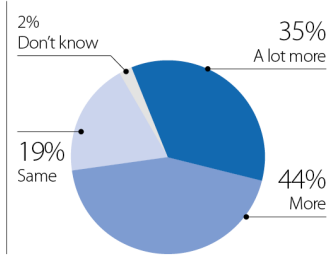
1,800 lawyers and 200 NGOs supported by UNESCO's Global Media Defence Fund, ensuring freedom of expression is defended.

MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 6 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 6 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“ UNESCO has been an incredible supporter to journalists, of Rappler and of me through the years.”

Maria Ressa, Journalist and recipient of the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize and the 2021 UNESCO Guillermo Cano Prize for her outstanding efforts to safeguard freedom of expression

THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget*
\$71.29
million spent

Voluntary contributions
\$81.1
million mobilized

* Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

With UNESCO's support, press freedom and the safety of journalists are being protected in line with international commitments.

↳ 10,000 inputs from 134 countries shaped UNESCO's new Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms.

↳ 8,000 journalists, 1,800 lawyers and 200 NGOs benefitted from UNESCO's Global Media Defense Fund.

↳ 12,000 judicial operators worldwide trained on handling crimes against journalists in 2022-2023.

138. **Nobel Laureates First Recognized by UNESCO for Press Freedom Advocacy.** UNESCO's steadfast advocacy for freedom of expression and press freedom, crucial rights increasingly under threat, has been invigorated by the momentum from the Windhoek+30 Declaration. The Organization has expanded its efforts through global campaigns, conferences, and the annual observance of World Press Freedom Day. Additionally, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Prize annually honours exceptional advocates of press freedom, three of whom have gone on to win the Nobel Peace Prize, highlighting the significant worldwide influence and credibility of UNESCO's initiatives.



All Stories Deserve to be Told. But Some Demand Our Full Attention.

Climate and biodiversity crises are not only affecting the environment and ecosystems but are also impacting the lives of countless individuals worldwide. The telling of human stories of turmoil and grief deserve to be known and shared, as through awareness change becomes possible. The role of journalists is therefore increasingly vital. Through their work, courage and perseverance the world can remain informed. They work on the frontlines of our collective struggle for our planet's well-being. On World Press Freedom Day 2024, UNESCO thus launched the *This Story Must Be Told* campaign, highlighting the contributions of journalists and photojournalists in unveiling stories that deserve to be told.

139. **UNESCO Leads UN Action to Enhance Journalist Safety.** UNESCO has been actively monitoring journalist killings through the Observatory of Killed Journalists and seeking updates from Member States on judicial inquiries into these cases. Since 1993, 1,678 journalists have been killed globally, with 86% of these cases remaining unresolved judicially, underscoring the significant risks journalists encounter in their profession. To address these challenges, UNESCO has implemented training and capacity-building programmes focused on safety protocols, risk assessment, and digital security for journalists and media professionals. Additionally, UNESCO has enhanced the capabilities of judiciaries worldwide providing specialized programmes to improve their handling of crimes against journalists reaching 36,000 judicial operators worldwide in the last 10 years, 12,000 only in the last biennium, specially via the Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and the Safety of Journalists.

140. **UNESCO's Media Defence Fund Protects Thousands of Journalists and Legal Defenders.** Through its Global Media Defence Fund (GMDF), UNESCO provides a unique funding mechanism for initiatives contributing to reinforcing the legal protection of journalists and enhancing media freedom, which has protected over

8,000 journalists (of which 40% women journalists), 1,400 lawyers, over 300 media organizations and nearly 250 society organizations. Over five years of implementation, the Fund has supported nearly 1,200 instances of legal assistance, 178 strategic litigation actions, and over 200 journalistic investigations into crimes against journalists, among many other initiatives. Following the launch of a UNESCO survey among GMDF partners in March 2024, 95% of respondents said that, in their opinion, the existence of the GMDF has made a difference.

141. **UNESCO Facilitates Synergies to Protect and Promote Media, Artistic, and Scientific Freedom.** UNESCO fosters collaborative efforts to protect and promote media freedom, artistic freedom, and scientific freedom. Across various regions, many artists, journalists, and scientists face common challenges when expressing their critical voices. These individuals play a vital role in raising public awareness about pressing issues, mobilizing others to advance key causes, exposing corruption and human rights abuses, and countering disinformation. However, they often encounter similar threats and attacks, being among the first to be silenced when civic space shrinks and crises occur. To reinforce their protection and support their freedom of expression, UNESCO has facilitated comparative research, dialogue, collaboration, and the sharing of experiences and knowledge among journalists, artists, scientists, and stakeholders who advocate for their rights.



UNESCO Leads Global Monitoring of the Safety of Journalists.

Highlights of the UNESCO Director-General's Report¹⁹ on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity published on 2022 International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists:

- In 2020-2021, UNESCO recorded a total of 117 killings of journalists worldwide.
- Though still unacceptably high, impunity for crimes committed against journalists has gradually decreased by 3% since 2018. In 2022, the global impunity rate was measured at 86% compared to 89% in 2018.
- 91 of the 117 journalists killed in 2020-2021 were killed while away from their offices.
- There is an increase in women journalists killed, almost doubling from 6 to 11% of all journalists killed.

142. **UNESCO's Internet for Trust Initiative Shapes Global Digital Governance.** UNESCO has spearheaded a global effort to enhance digital platform governance, collecting over 10,000 inputs from 134 countries through its Internet for Trust initiative. This initiative united governments, companies, and civil society to develop the much-used *Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms*. This inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach has produced a framework now influencing policy discussions and decisions worldwide, empowering stakeholders to protect fundamental rights and ensure a free, open and trustworthy internet for all.

With UNESCO's support, countries are adopting policies to increase media pluralism and media viability at a time of digital transformation.

↳ **91% of the world's population** lives in a country or territory where they can formally request information from a state and/or a local authority

↳ **Media in 61 countries** are better prepared to report before, during and after crises, including humanitarian emergencies, natural and human-induced disasters.

↳ **138 countries** adopted various access to information legal guarantees, **26 adopted** since adoption of 2030 agenda

143. **UNESCO's Advocacy Contributes to Expansion of Access to Information Laws to 138 Countries.** UNESCO's technical support has contributed to 26 additional countries adopting access to information laws, bringing the

¹⁹ UNESCO. (2022). Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity. This is a biannual report, with updated figures to be published in next Director General's Report, which will be issued later in 2024.

total to 138. These laws empower people to request data from public authorities, fostering informed decision-making about their lives and communities. UNESCO's efforts equip individuals with the tools to actively participate in shaping policies and services that impact their lives and national development.



With UNESCO's Support, Radio Begum is Giving Afghan Women A Voice.

Amidst adversity in Afghanistan, Hamida Aman founded Radio Begum, a women-led radio station empowering Afghan women's voices. With UNESCO's support, Radio Begum has become a beacon of resilience, providing a platform for women to share their stories and advocate for their rights. The station has expanded its coverage to four provinces, offering safety training and resources to its staff. Hamida's unwavering commitment to empowering women through media has inspired her community and beyond.

Radio Begum exemplifies the vital role of independent, pluralistic media in promoting gender equality and giving voice to the marginalized. UNESCO's support for such grassroots initiatives is crucial in fostering inclusive, diverse media landscapes that contribute to building just and peaceful societies.

144. **UNESCO Strengthens Crisis Preparedness and Reporting for Media Institutions in 28 Countries.** UNESCO has supported 262 radio stations in 61 countries and 106 media institutions in 28 countries to better prepare for and respond to crises like humanitarian emergencies, climate change and disasters. By promoting solutions-journalism and providing digital tools for investigative reporting on climate change, UNESCO champions media pluralism and independence. These efforts have strengthened media landscapes globally, enabling media institutions to produce and disseminate accurate and reliable content before, during and after emergencies.

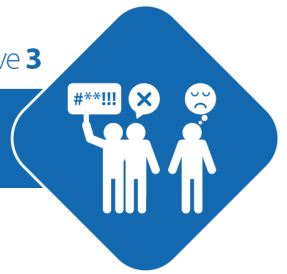


UNESCO Supports Media Safe Spaces in Conflict Situations.

"In Khartoum, every day was uncertain... The centre provided a conducive environment for work and study. Basic amenities like the internet allowed me to stay connected. It also gave me the peace to introspect and plan my next steps amidst the chaos... The safe space was a beacon of hope, allowing me to regroup and rethink my future." Freelance Sudanese journalist and beneficiary of the Port Sudan emergency shelter.

The 'Safe Spaces' initiative, implemented through the IPDC, established pilot projects in Ukraine, Pakistan, and Sudan. In Ukraine, UNESCO strengthened a network of six solidarity centres, which as of January 2024 had trained 5,600 journalists in safety measures, distributed 700 bulletproof vests, provided legal and psychological support, and aided 1,000 journalists. UNESCO also supported 14 generators for solidarity centres and independent media during power cuts.

145. **UNESCO Empowers 200 Grassroots Media to Foster Inclusive Societies Globally.** UNESCO has supported over 200 grassroots media projects worldwide, promoting media pluralism, countering hate speech, and amplifying marginalized voices. Through its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), UNESCO addresses critical local needs, enhancing the capacity of local media to deliver community-specific news and information. One-third of these projects have focused on gender equality, expanding coverage and amplifying women's voices. These initiatives have fostered inclusive and pluralistic media landscapes around the world.



Outcome 7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes

Embracing Inclusion, Standing Against Discrimination and Racism



THE NUMBERS

UNESCO leads the fight against intolerance and hate speech, championing inclusion efforts.

In 2020-2023

More than

15,000
students and teachers

have become UNESCO champions against racism, helping spread the message in their communities.

Close to

10,000
young people,

from over 70 countries shaped new research from a youth perspective on post-Covid recovery.

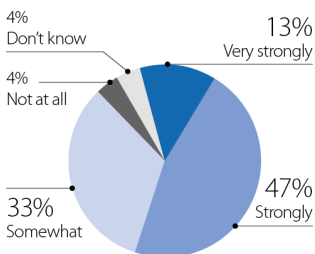
Unanimous decision

by Member States on a new initiative to promote the freedom and safety of scientists led by UNESCO.

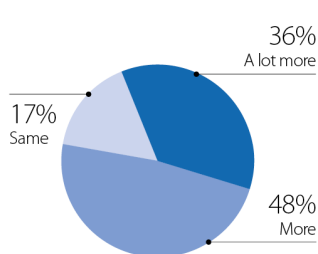


MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 7 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 7 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“ I believe strongly in UNESCO and I thank you, because we need you, we need to be united to fight against racism.”

Olivier Rousteing, World Renowned Fashion Designer addresses UNESCO's Master Class against Racism and Discriminations on 21 March 2022



THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget*
\$223.4
million spent

Voluntary contributions
\$130.1
million mobilized

* Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

With UNESCO's support, communities are mobilizing against all forms of discrimination and racism, healing divisions through intercultural dialogue.

↳ Over **15,000 Youth and their Teachers** mobilised to combat racism and promote inclusion.

↳ At UNESCO, Social Media Influencer Khaby Lame asks his **163 million followers** to join in the fight against racism.

↳ Data from **160 countries** shape know-how of effective intercultural dialogue for peace and inclusion.

146. **UNESCO Mobilizes Over 15,000 Youth and Teachers to Combat Racism and Promote Inclusion.** UNESCO has engaged more than 15,000 youth, their teachers, UN agencies, cities, and NGOs to become anti-racism champions worldwide. Through the annual Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination, UNESCO has forged partnerships to promote racial equity, gender equality, migrants' and indigenous peoples' rights, and disability inclusion and history and memory linked to the transatlantic slave trade. UNESCO launched platforms like the Network of Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Officials and the Writers against Racism Network at the Global Forum to support concrete actions. Additionally, alliances with the North American Partnership for Equity and Racial Justice, the Global Coalition against Systemic Racism and for Reparations, and the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent have amplified diverse voices. The UNESCO Anti-Racism Toolkit has become a key policy priority in many countries, ensuring that anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts are central to institutional and community agendas.



UNESCO Mobilizes Influencers to Champion Anti-Racism.

World-renowned social media influencer Khaby Lame, with 163 million TikTok followers, brought together more than 1,200 in-person participants and thousands online from middle schools to universities across 31 countries. The resulting 2024 Master Class against Racism and Discrimination, held at UNESCO Headquarters, focused on fighting racism through social media.

Dubbed by Forbes as the “Charlie Chaplin of the digital age”, Khaby Lame headlined the event, sharing his experiences and advising young participants on becoming anti-racism champions. “We have to show our kids”, Lame said, “when they come to you and ask why this kid is different from me, why they have another colour, we just have to say that we are the same.”

Through initiatives like this, UNESCO mobilizes diverse voices to amplify its impact in promoting inclusivity and fighting discrimination.

147. **UNESCO's Intercultural Dialogue Framework Promotes Global Understanding and Conflict Prevention in 160 Countries.** UNESCO's Framework for Enabling Intercultural Dialogue, spanning over 160 countries, has significantly impacted global and national efforts to manage diversity. By fostering understanding and cooperation between diverse cultures, the framework is essential for social cohesion, conflict prevention, and inclusivity. Programmes like the Silk Roads deepen appreciation of shared legacies.



UNESCO Helps to Address Historical Injustices Through the General History of Africa Programme.

Through the General History of Africa (GHA) UNESCO is addressing knowledge injustices and fostering solidarity. This is possible by advancing research on the History of Africa and its relevance for today's challenges as well as integrating African history into education systems. The new volume on the GHA presents significant new research on the African diaspora world-wide. Thanks to UNESCO's support, Kenya has incorporated the GHA into junior and secondary education, as well as into teacher diploma qualifications. In 2023, the seminar "Decolonizing the Teaching and Learning of Africa's History" attracted over 400 participants and led to the formation of an expert review committee. The GHA pedagogical materials aim to support the integration of African history into national curricula and facilitate its teaching and learning in formal, non-formal, and informal education settings across Africa and beyond. UNESCO's efforts are making a significant impact by ensuring African history is accurately represented and widely taught, promoting a more inclusive and informed understanding of the continent's rich heritage.

148. UNESCO's Efforts Illuminate the History and Memory of Slavery and Foster Global Reconciliation.

UNESCO has played major role in breaking the silence around the history of slavery, placing this tragedy into the world's memory. With its upcoming 30th anniversary in 2024, the Routes of Enslaved Peoples programme has facilitated dialogue and reconciliation across the Americas, Europe and Africa. Through innovative initiatives and partnerships, UNESCO is addressing the legacies of enslavement, facilitating dialogue, remembrance, and reconciliation. Feedback from participants highlights the profound impact of UNESCO's efforts in healing the deep wounds of slavery's legacy and building a foundation for a more just future. With 89% of conflicts occurring in areas with stalled dialogues, these initiatives are vital for peace and unity.

With UNESCO's support, countries are leveraging the contribution of the social and human sciences and a human rights-based vision of science to build inclusive and sustainable societies.

↳ **5,000 members and 2,300 experts** across 44 countries are connected through UNESCO's Policy Lab.

↳ **60 countries** joined UNESCO's Call to Action on **Freedom and Safety of Scientists**.

↳ **UNESCO is the only UN agency** with a Futures Studies University Chairs network.

149. **UNESCO's Digital Platform Shapes Inclusive Policies in 44 Countries.** UNESCO's digital platform, part of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme and Inclusive Policy Lab, connects 5,000 members and 2,500 experts across 150 collaborative spaces. This platform has produced over 110 policy-influencing knowledge products, impacting inclusive policies in 44 countries. Notably, papers such as "Basic Income" have been cited in European Parliament deliberations, showcasing UNESCO's ability to shape inclusive development policies on a global scale.

150. UNESCO's Call-to-Action Promotes Human-Rights Based Science in 60 Countries through the 2017 Recommendation.

UNESCO is championing a human-rights-based vision of science through its 2017 Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers. The Organization has assisted six African countries in aligning their science ecosystems with this Recommendation. Through its Programme on Freedom and Safety of Scientists, UNESCO highlights the often-overlooked human right to science. UNESCO has issued a Call-to-Action, supported by 60 Member States, setting action priorities and conducting research on scientific freedom in eight countries. These efforts empower scientists to work safely and freely, fostering robust and impactful research that drives global progress.



UNESCO Amplifies Global Reach Through Strategic Partnerships and National Commission Collaboration.

UNESCO's 13th Youth Forum, held in November 2023, and gathering 173 youth from 154 countries, showcased the Organization's ability to leverage social media and influential partnerships to amplify its message on issues relevant to young people. This event exemplifies the added value of combining strengths between the UNESCO Secretariat, Member States, and private sector partners.

By collaborating with K-pop sensation SEVENTEEN, with the particular support of the Korean National Commission and Pledis Entertainment, UNESCO transformed a conventional meeting into a viral phenomenon, reaching a potential audience of over 943 million people across various social media platforms. This strategic approach not only increased visibility for the Forum's focus on the social impacts of climate change but also engaged younger audiences in meaningful discussions about sustainable futures.

The success of the campaign around the Forum was evident in its impressive metrics, which included over 589,000 mentions, 8.3 million social actions, and nearly 44 million video views across all UNESCO accounts. By tailoring content for different platforms and demographics, UNESCO effectively bridged the gap between policymaking and youth-driven innovation. The Forum's impact extended beyond social media, generating over 300 press articles in international media outlets. This comprehensive digital strategy showcases UNESCO's ability to facilitate global conversations, empower young changemakers, and create a ripple effect of awareness and action on critical issues like climate change. It demonstrates the power of combining traditional forums with modern digital engagement techniques.

151. **UNESCO Drives Youth Leadership in Global Policy and Post-COVID Recovery.** UNESCO has empowered youth and policy stakeholders to shape youth policies together in 28 countries, by providing technical guidance and capacity-development support, as well as fostering intergenerational dialogues, facilitated by the resources of the UNESCO Toolbox for youth policy and programming. This collaboration has led to five countries integrating participatory youth processes into policymaking, resulting in the adoption national youth policies and strategies in Mauritania and Zambia in 2023. Additionally, UNESCO's global Youth As Researchers (YAR) initiative enabled close to 10,000 youth from over 70 countries to influence post-COVID recovery policies, leading to youth-led solutions and significant commitments on well-being, learning, rights, the use of technologies, and youth action. 13 national or regional YAR initiatives provided youth insights and solutions on other key challenges, relevant to gender, inclusion, climate change, youth resilience, etc., contributing to policy processes through public dialogues with policy-makers and other stakeholders.

With UNESCO's support, countries coalesced around a new understanding of peace as a positive, participatory process to build just, inclusive, healthy, sustainable and peaceful societies²⁰

↳ **194 Member States** endorsed new Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.

↳ **85 Member States** unite to combat hate speech through vast education network.

↳ **300,000 teachers and 11,000 master trainers** trained in social and emotional learning.

152. **UNESCO Advances Global Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.** In 2023, at its 42nd session, the General Conference adopted—by consensus—the Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development. This revised text redefines peace as a positive and participatory process aimed at building just, inclusive, healthy, sustainable, and peaceful societies. The

²⁰ This work is programmed under Strategic Objective 3, outcome 7, but it contributes transversally to several 40-41 C/5 outcomes. To reflect this, education for sustainable development has been reflected under outcome 3, education for health and well-being has been reflected under outcome 1, and peace and global citizenship has been reflected under outcome 7.

recommendation is the culmination of a two-year, inclusive, participatory, and transparent consultative process involving more than 3,000 experts from over 130 countries. Since its adoption, UNESCO has been actively supporting countries in translating the spirit of the recommendation into action. An explainer brochure has been published, and an implementation guide and policy review tool are currently under development.

153. **UNESCO Supports Member States to Foster Transformative Quality Education and Promote Learners as Active, Creative and Socially Responsible Global Citizens.** To advance social-emotional learning, MGIEP trained 300,000 teachers including 11,000 Master trainers in social emotional learning and digital pedagogies. UNESCO's work on human rights and the Prevention of Violent Extremism has included initiatives like youth empowerment, teacher training in human rights and training media professionals in conflict-sensitive reporting in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Sudan and South Sudan. Within this line of work, two publications were launched: *Human Rights Education: Key Success Factors* and *Empowering Students for Just Societies: A handbook to teach integrity in secondary schools*.

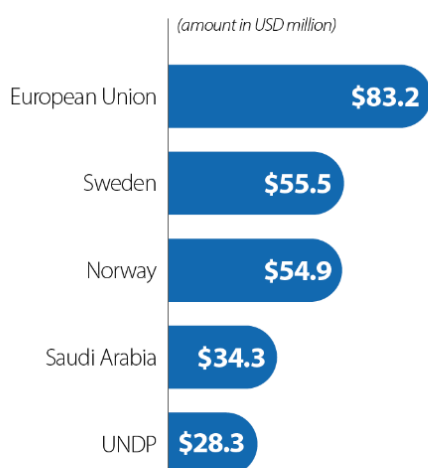
154. **UNESCO Significantly Advances Global Efforts to Combat Hate Speech, Racism and all Forms of Discrimination through Education.** In 2021, it convened the Global Education Ministers Conference on Addressing Hate Speech, attracting over 4,000 attendees, including representatives from 85 Member States and nearly 60 education ministers and officials. Post-conference, UNESCO developed vital resources such as a guide for policy-makers, a policy brief, teacher trainer guidelines on digital citizenship, and a guide for addressing conspiracy theories. In 2023, UNESCO launched its *Addressing Hate Speech through Education* policy guide globally in Costa Rica and regionally in Nepal, reaching around 1,000 educators. It also progressed the third cycle of its International Program on Holocaust and Genocide Education, providing regional guidance for African teachers and developing an online course on antisemitism. These initiatives underscore UNESCO's impactful role in countering hate speech and promoting education for peace worldwide.

Strategic Objective 3

Partnerships

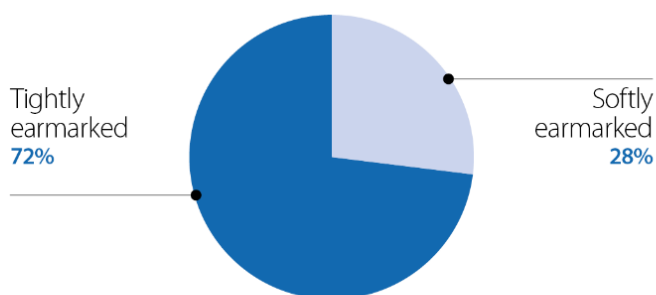


TOP 5 DONORS

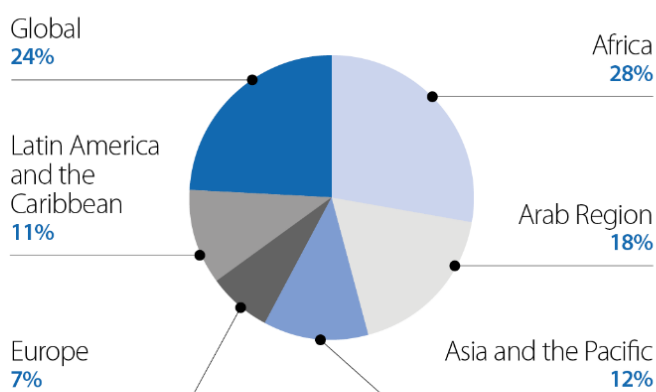


RESOURCES MOBILIZED

Modality



Beneficiary Regions



HIGHLIGHT

Received **\$443.8 million** in voluntary contributions, **28% of total funds mobilized**



High level of **donor confidence** in UNESCO's action



Global Media Defence Fund, a

Multi-Partner Trust fund created with two founding donors (Canada and UK) -> expanded through successful mobilization of additional government donors (now 17 in total) & the private sector



UNESCO's **'Internet for Trust'** conference showcases its key role in multi-stakeholder engagement. Catalyzes government, multilateral and NGO mobilization. The broad partner ecosystem offers potential for increased resource mobilization and impact



ResiliArt, a global movement during COVID-19, showcased the power of multistakeholder partnerships in fostering critical dialogue, data sharing, and advocacy for culture throughout and beyond the pandemic



The collective mobilization of NGOs and other partners has been a significant contribution to this Objective. This was the case for MONDIACULT*, Internet for Trust and the Culture & Arts Education Conference and contributed to strengthening ownership and lay a solid foundation for future partnerships

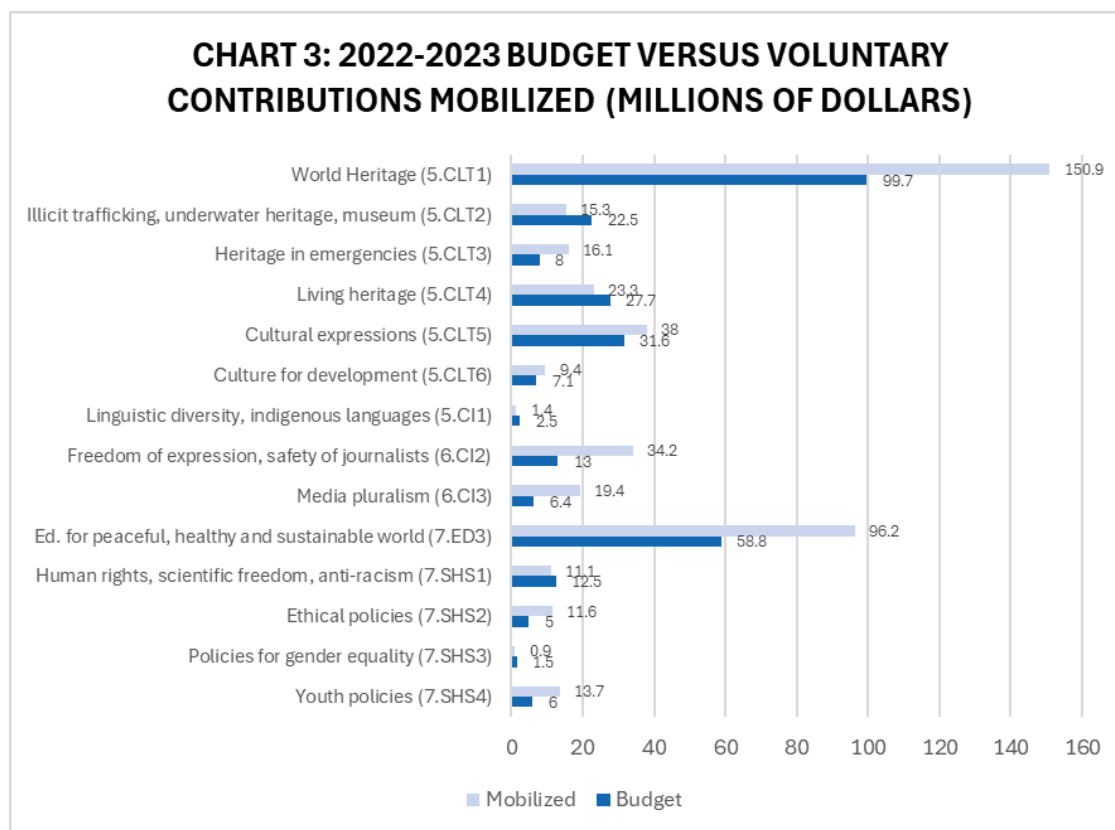


* World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development 2022

Funding Gap Analysis for Voluntary Contributions 2022 – 2023²¹ The Untapped Potential²²

155. UNESCO secured significant voluntary contributions under Strategic Objective 3. Multi-donor pooled mechanisms have shown the importance of flexibility and enhanced the effectiveness of UNESCO's interventions, both in emergencies and beyond. However, some gaps remained for:

- The Roadmap against Racism and Discrimination, the Routes of Enslaved Peoples, and the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers.
- Initiatives to eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination, gender biases and stereotypes, including in the digital world, such as the transforming MENTalities programme.
- Illicit trafficking and underwater heritage, including boosting ratification of the 1970, 2001, and 1995 UNIDROIT Conventions, harmonizing national legislations, enhancing preventive measures and increasing assistance in return and restitution procedures.
- For the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, indigenous peoples' media, and integrating indigenous languages into education, there is a need for greater cooperation and partnership with other conventions and development frameworks to support intersectoral initiatives.
- Additional resources are needed for raising community awareness of intangible cultural heritage and promoting collective rights to protect cultural heritage.
- Protecting artists and cultural professionals in emergency situations requires additional resources, including for UNESCO's monitoring and advocacy efforts, as well as for tailored emergency assistance mechanisms.



²¹ While the SRR covers the period from 2020 to 2023, outputs were revised for the second biennium, making it difficult to combine the two periods for budget and resource mobilization comparisons. The focus on 2022-2023 allows to analyse the latest trends in terms of funding gaps.

²² Please also refer to the Methodology Section following the Executive Summary for more information on the funding analysis.

Lessons Learned – Strategic Objective 3

 RELEVANCE	 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Culture’s impact on sustainable development is increasingly recognized and should be integrated across all SDGs. → Heritage protection must adapt to climate change impacts and increased illicit trafficking due to armed conflicts. → Living heritage and cultural diversity foster resilience and social cohesion, requiring enhanced protection in emergencies. → Urgent need to address online hate speech and violence against scientists, artists and journalists, linked to disinformation trends highlighted during COVID-19. → Digital transformation is affecting information access, requiring solutions to preserve media viability and promote better-adapted governance systems for digital platforms. → Increasing disasters, climate change, and protracted conflicts necessitate stronger media capacities in crisis settings. → Changing youth realities affect education’s role in promoting health, sustainable development, human rights and peace. 	<p>As specialized culture agency, UNESCO has proven its unique position due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Expertise in protection of artists and cultural heritage, including underwater and during conflicts. → Leadership in combating illicit trafficking of cultural property. → Strong framework for safeguarding intangible heritage (2003 Convention). → Ability to foster interdisciplinary approaches to global challenges. → Potential to contribute to a new Declaration for Future Generations. → Expertise in leveraging education for peace, human rights and sustainable development. <p>UNESCO must increase its leverage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → As lead UN agency for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages; → Its coordination role for the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and Issue of Impunity; and → Its responsibility for promoting media development and pluralism, as well as access to information and monitoring SDG 16.10.2.
 CAPACITY TO DELIVER	 SUSTAINABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Follow-up to high level political commitments is needed to ensure financing for delivering on the ground. → UNESCO needs to balance global commitments with on-the-ground delivery capacity. → More resources needed for growing World Heritage list and threats, including digital technologies. → Medium/long-term resource mobilization and communication plans helped secure flexible funding. → Additional resources in 2022-2023 aided Heritage Emergency Fund, Media Defense Fund, and Safety of Journalists. → Increased focus on climate change impact on coastal cultural sites. → New ICPRCP rules and strengthened art market dialogue facilitate restitution/return cases. → Additional convention meetings require more resources and flexible schedules. → Assessed contributions can strategically mobilize larger alliances and funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Active ownership of cultural and natural sites by countries is crucial for preservation, policy integration, and local community involvement. → Formal recognition of artists as vulnerable during emergencies strengthens cultural rights protection. Increased inscriptions on the 2003 Convention Lists require more resources for appropriate safeguarding aligned with community aspirations. → Sustainability relies on local stakeholder capacity development, enhanced through partnerships with specialized C2C and NGOs. → Media viability improves when local entities manage their own media landscapes. → Including culture in development planning frameworks supports sustained implementation of SDG-promoting initiatives. → Integrating freedom of expression and access to information modules into duty bearer curricula ensures greater sustainability. → Incorporating the General History of Africa into school curricula anchors the initiative to learning needs. → An accessible youth policy and programming toolbox supports related initiatives’ sustainability. → Risk assessments enable UNESCO to promote and apply agile responses in volatile project environments.

Strategic Objective

4

Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards

Adapting for a digital future

156. The transformative shift in the global technological landscape was a major feature during the reporting period, alongside the rapid advancement of digital technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI). The shift was significantly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the accelerated progress of technologies proved crucial for ensuring continuity in education, work, and social interaction, it also exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities. During the pandemic, global internet usage surged by 40%,²³ highlighting both the potential and the disparities in digital access.

157. The rise in disinformation, misinformation, and online hate content led to grave concerns around privacy breaches, discrimination, and intellectual property violations, highlighting the urgent need for inclusive and ethical approaches to technology development and governance. Misinformation related to COVID-19, termed the “infodemic” by the World Health Organization, contributed to public mistrust and hindered effective response measures. In this context, access to memory institutions, such as archives and libraries, became key for reliable information and knowledge. In this landscape, UNESCO emerged as a thought leader, leveraging its unique interdisciplinary expertise to protect the integrity of AI and digital technologies.

158. As an agenda-setter, UNESCO spearheaded groundbreaking initiatives, such as the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI. This first-of-its-kind global standard guided over 50 countries in aligning their AI policies with ethical principles. UNESCO’s innovative methodologies, like the Readiness Assessment and Ethical Impact Assessment empowered, and it is hoped will continue to support governments to implement AI responsibly. UNESCO’s convening power brought together diverse stakeholders, from Member States to tech giants, fostering a global dialogue on AI ethics through platforms like the AI Ethics Experts Network. This collaborative approach extended to addressing pressing challenges like AI’s gendered impacts and the ethics of neurotechnology.

159. UNESCO also focused on strengthening Member States’ capacities to develop national media and information literacy (MIL) policies and strategies in response to these growing online challenges and to bridge the digital transformation and knowledge divides. The global pivot to the digital world during the pandemic and the UN’s Transforming Education Summit process were paramount to how UNESCO designed its work to ensure greater impact. UNESCO’s advocacy for MIL took centre stage amidst the infodemic. By integrating MIL into national policies and curricula, UNESCO empowered citizens, especially youth, to critically engage with media and counter disinformation.

160. Recognizing the transformative potential of digital technologies in education, UNESCO provided policy guidance and capacity building to strengthen digital literacy and AI competencies. Initiatives like the ICT Competency Framework for Teachers equipped educators worldwide to navigate the digital landscape effectively and inclusively.

161. Looking ahead, UNESCO is poised to deepen its impact. The AI Ethics and Governance Observatory will facilitate knowledge exchange, while the Internet for Trust initiative will promote a human rights-based approach to digital platform governance. Collaboration with partners will be key to addressing digital divides and ensuring no one is left behind. In an era marked by rapid technological change, UNESCO’s strategic interventions have laid the foundation for a human-centred digital future. By championing ethical AI, media and information literacy, digital literacy, open solutions, and inclusive governance, UNESCO is steering technology to serve the best interests of all humanity.

²³ Data references in this section are from: *International Telecommunication Union. (2020). COVID-19 and the Digital Divide. ITU Report*; *World Health Organization. (2021). Managing the COVID-19 infodemic: Promoting healthy behaviors and mitigating the harm from misinformation and disinformation. WHO Report*; *UNESCO. (2022). Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework. UNESCO Report*; *UNESCO. (2021). Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence.*



Outcome 8: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age

Learning and Living Digital



THE NUMBERS

UNESCO is transforming futures by allowing open access to digital knowledge and equipping individuals worldwide with digital skills and media and information literacy.

In 2020-2023

110
countries

supported during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure learning continues.

More than
16,000
teachers

across 389 schools and 73 universities in 17 countries already trained to integrate Media and Information Literacy in teaching.

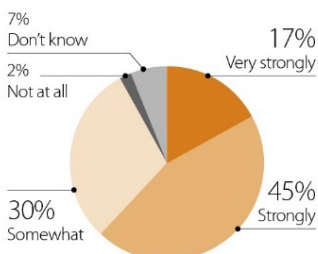
540
youth
organizations

mobilized globally to fight online disinformation, reaching tens of thousands of youths.

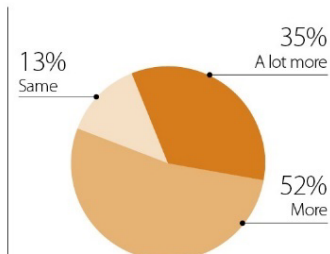


MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 8 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 8 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“UNESCO lit the path for the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority to work with all national stakeholders to embrace digital inclusion by supporting and designing a framework to effectively approach this issue.”

Malahat Obaid, Director Public Relations, Pakistan Telecom Authority



THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget*

\$66.1
million spent

Voluntary contributions

\$23.7
million mobilized

* Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

With UNESCO's support, countries are equipping citizens with critical media and information literacy (MIL) skills and digital competencies to thrive in an information age.

↳ **12 countries** spearheading the movement to equip populations with critical MIL skills.

↳ **Tens of thousands of youths in 22 countries** are combating disinformation through MIL.

↳ **16,000 teachers across 389 schools and 73 universities** equipped to build media literate societies through the integration of UNESCO's model MIL curriculum.

162. UNESCO Leads Global Movement to Integrate Media and Information Literacy into Education Systems. UNESCO is championing Media and Information Literacy (MIL) as a critical skill for the digital age. Through sustained advocacy, UNESCO has integrated MIL into the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/267 and the Transforming Education Summit, urging countries to develop comprehensive MIL policies and strategies with 12 countries having done so since the resolution was passed in 2021. UNESCO's model MIL curriculum and Global Standards for MIL Curricula Development Guidelines are being adapted globally, positioning MIL as an indispensable tool for navigating the digital world.

163. UNESCO Supports Youth Organizations in 22 Countries to Combat Disinformation. UNESCO supports over 540 youth organizations in 22 countries, including training over 200 youth organisations in 15 African countries, to combat disinformation and promote peace through Media and Information Literacy (MIL). By integrating MIL into their policies and operations, tens of thousands of youths are equipped with critical skills to navigate today's complex media landscape. This initiative effectively combats disinformation and hate speech, promotes peace and human rights, and advances the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

164. UNESCO Equips Teachers in 17 Countries to Promote Media and Information Literacy. UNESCO has trained over 16,000 teachers across 389 schools and 73 universities in 17 countries using its model Media and Information Literacy (MIL) curriculum. To further expand access to MIL training, UNESCO has developed seven Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on media and information literacy, available in five languages. These initiatives enable teachers worldwide to foster critical thinking skills and informed citizenship among their students.

165. UNESCO Partners with Media Institutions in 14 Countries to promote Media and Information Literacy. UNESCO has strengthened the capacity of 46 media institutions and regulators to promote Media and Information Literacy (MIL). This initiative equips them to educate the public on critical media engagement, misinformation identification, and meaningful participation in the information ecosystem. By incorporating MIL into their standards, practices, and public outreach, these entities contribute to creating more media-literate societies, amplifying UNESCO's impact.

With UNESCO's support, countries are fostering inclusive knowledge sharing for citizens through open solutions.

↳ **132 countries** took actions to support Open Education Resource (OER) at national and/or 31 institutional levels through policy and capacity building initiatives

↳ **38 countries** developed Open Access and Open Data policies.

↳ **43 countries** strengthened capacities to safeguard humanity's collective memory and increase access to documentary heritage.

166. **With UNESCO's support, 170 Countries Embrace Open Education Solutions, Fostering Inclusive Knowledge-sharing Worldwide.** During the 1st Consultation on the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER), UNESCO supported 132 countries to embrace Open Educational Resources in accordance with the 2019 Recommendation on OER. Moreover, advocacy has led several countries to use Open Data Guidelines as benchmarks for policy development. Among the participating Member States, 38 have already developed Open Access and Data policies.



UNESCO's Global Partnerships Unite 113 Countries to Bridge the Digital Divide.

UNESCO's multistakeholder partnerships are crucial in expanding access to education and information, bridging the digital divide, and fostering inclusive knowledge societies. Through the UNESCO/Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Open Educational Resources (OER) Dynamic Coalition, UNESCO promotes freely accessible educational materials, aligning with its recommendations to broaden learning access. This Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Dynamic Coalition facilitates dialogue on creating an open, secure, and inclusive internet for all. Collaborations such as these enable UNESCO to promote information sharing and engage diverse stakeholders, ensuring universal benefits from digital technologies. The OER Dynamic Coalition supports the UNESCO 2019 Recommendation on OER, which is the only UN normative instrument focused on openly licensed learning content and technologies. With 486 members from 113 Member States, representing 40 intergovernmental organizations, 80 NGOs, 42 private sector actors, and 192 entities from academia, UNESCO's efforts to promote and implement this recommendation demonstrate its significant impact in promoting inclusive education and closing the digital gap worldwide.

167. **UNESCO Collaborates with 43 Countries to Preserve and Increase Access to Documentary Heritage.** UNESCO has partnered with 43 countries to safeguard humanity's collective memory and enhance access to invaluable documentary heritage, in line with its 2015 Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form. By strengthening capacities, increasing nominations for the Memory of the World International Register and the UNESCO-Jikji Memory of the World Prize, and enhancing skills through regional workshops, UNESCO is ensuring that documents, manuscripts, and recordings are protected and accessible. This effort enriches our understanding of the past offers solutions for the present and informs our future.



UNESCO Empowers Public Administrations for Digital Transformation.

UNESCO is strengthening public administrations to overcome barriers to digital transformation, such as cultural resistance to innovation, insufficient investment in data management and IT infrastructure, and low digital skills within the public sector. These challenges hinder governments from fostering digital transformation at the national level.

To address these issues, UNESCO developed an AI and Digital Transformation Competency Framework for Civil Servants through global consultations at the UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development. The potential for global impact is evident when early results already show impact at the national level. The Development Board in Rwanda have, for example, put the Framework in action with over 200 staff members and senior management trained on AI, data governance, public service design, strategic planning, and foresight, significantly enhancing digital transformation at Rwanda's premier public service delivery organization.



UNESCO Equips African Youth with Media and Information Literacy for Civic Engagement.

UNESCO's "Media and Information Literacy for Youth Civic Engagement in Africa" project has empowered young women and men from six African countries with critical MIL skills. Supported by Japan, the project reached over 200 youth organizations, equipping them to integrate MIL into their activities. Participants learned to verify information, counter disinformation and hate speech, and use media for peace-building, human rights, and advancing the SDGs.

Fatoumata, a young activist from Mali, described the transformation: *"I used to share information without verifying it. Now, I always fact-check before posting and teach others to do the same. MIL is a powerful tool for youth to make a positive change in our communities."*

Through this initiative, African youth are emerging as MIL leaders, fostering a culture of peace, dialogue, and critical thinking in the digital age. UNESCO's work highlights the transformative potential of MIL in promoting youth civic engagement and shaping a more informed and resilient society.

With UNESCO's support, countries are transforming learning through educational technologies and digital innovations, making it more inclusive, engaging, and impactful for all.

↳ **110 countries** supported to ensure learning continuity during the pandemic through quality distance and hybrid learning, and empowering learners and teachers with digital skills.

↳ **60 countries** are now engaged in the digital transformation of their education systems, more than double compared to 2020-2021.

↳ **14 countries** engaged in Gateways to Public Digital Learning initiatives, establishing and improving public digital learning platforms.

168. **UNESCO Supported Over 110 Countries to Ensure Learning Continuity During School Closures**, developing tools, documenting best practices, generating and sharing innovative ideas and recommendations for effective distance learning, and curating distance learning resources in 50 languages across over 470 national learning platforms. For example, the ImaginEcole platform launched in December 2020, provided educational resources to 6.6 million French-speaking students and education staff in 11 countries of Central and West Africa.

169. **UNESCO Expands Digital Transformation Support in Education to 60 Countries**. UNESCO has more than doubled its efforts to facilitate the digital transformation of education, now supporting 60 countries. Since COVID-19, technology has become central to educational strategies globally. UNESCO has scaled up its support from 27 countries in 2020-21 to 60 in 2022-2023. This includes bridging equity gaps for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) by prioritizing ICT in Education Master Plans. In Africa, initiatives like Technology-enabled Open Schools for All have been pivotal. UNESCO has helped formulate national ICT education policies, strengthen teachers' digital competencies, and develop digital learning platforms. These efforts reached an estimated 100,000 teachers and 1 million students in 2023, enhancing educational opportunities across the continent. The Organization's work has equipped countries to leverage digital learning for improved educational outcomes.

170. **UNESCO and UNICEF Partner to Transform Digital Learning in 14 Countries.** Co-led by UNESCO and UNICEF, the Gateways to Public Digital Learning Initiative was inspired by the Transforming Education Summit. Today, it is working to transform education in 14 countries by establishing and enhancing public digital learning platforms. The initiative maps existing platforms, fosters an international community of practice, and sets global norms and standards. Additionally, through the Digital Transformation Collaborative (DTC) – a technology focused subgroup of the Global Education Coalition - UNESCO is working to strengthen digital learning ecosystems and build multistakeholder partnerships, ensuring a comprehensive impact on education systems worldwide.



UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework for Teachers Revolutionizes Digital Capacity Building.

The ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT CFT) is revolutionizing digital capacity building for educators, offering a game-changing approach to education in 14 countries. For example, in Rwanda, four workshops were conducted to create an ICT course for teachers with disabilities, enabling them to effectively utilize technology in the classroom. This initiative showcases UNESCO's commitment to promoting inclusive education and harnessing the power of digital tools to support all educators.

Since January 2023, the ICT CFT has become one of the five most downloaded tools on the CI Website, demonstrating the growing interest and demand for this transformative framework. By providing a clear roadmap for integrating technology into teaching practices, the ICT CFT is equipping educators with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the digital age and deliver high-quality, engaging learning experiences for all students.

171. **UNESCO Supports 50 Member States in Navigating AI Technologies in Education.** Responding to concerns about generative AI systems in early 2023, UNESCO convened an online Ministerial Roundtable on Generative AI in Education in May 2023. UNESCO also released the "Guidance on Generative AI in Education and Research", building on the 2021 "AI and Education: Guidance for Policy-Makers". To aid implementation, UNESCO held seminars for policy-makers from 50 Member States. UNESCO has led in promoting multi-stakeholder dialogues on AI in education, especially during its annual Digital Learning Week. These efforts ensure robust stakeholder engagement and policy coherence, helping Member States effectively steer the use of AI technologies in education.

172. **UNESCO's Publications Shape Global Perspectives on Technology in Education.** UNESCO has significantly shaped global understanding of the role of technology in education through a series of influential publications. Notably, the landmark 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report, "Technology in Education: A Tool on Whose Terms?" and "An Ed-Tech Tragedy? Educational Technologies and School Closures in the Time of COVID-19" have made a profound impact. These reports received extensive media coverage; the Global Education Monitoring report alone was downloaded 70,000 times in the first month following its release and was cited in 2,700 media articles across over 100 countries, including major outlets like The Guardian, BBC, Al Jazeera, El Pais, and BFM TV.



Outcome 9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies & digital transformation

Shaping the Ethics of New Technologies



THE NUMBERS

UNESCO is connecting ethicists, scientists, policymakers, judges, journalists, and civil society to assist countries in enacting sound policies on ethical issues in science and technology.

In 2020-2023

Over
50
countries

have been equipped with tools to harness AI's benefits while addressing its risks.

5,900

judicial operators

across 141 countries are now better prepared to leverage AI responsibly.

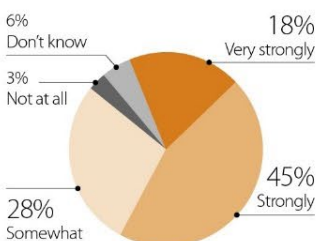
UNESCO's expertise informs

G7 and G20
on AI governance discourse.

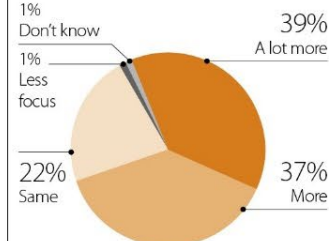


MEMBER STATES SAY

Outcome 9 contributed to positive change in their countries



Outcome 9 should increase its programmatic focus



THE VOICES

“The establishment of the Women4Ethical AI Platform [by UNESCO] is the realization of a promise fulfilled.”

Itah Kandjii Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation of Namibia

“UNESCO reacted [to the open letter on AI regulation] right away, calling on its Member States to adopt safeguards and ensure that AI is developed in accordance with ethical principles.”

Stuart Jonathan Russell OBE, Professor of Computer Science at the University of California, Berkeley



THE RESOURCES

Integrated budget*
\$18.2
million spent

Voluntary contributions
\$30.5
million mobilized

* Integrated budget includes assessed contributions and voluntary contributions.

Why our work has made a difference

With UNESCO's support, countries are harnessing the power of AI and frontier technologies, while safeguarding against risks and inequalities.

↳ UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI is the **first ever global standard on AI ethics**, adopted by 193 Member States.

↳ **50 countries** have so far implemented UNESCO's AI Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM).

↳ UNESCO's Internet Universality ROAM-X indicator framework implemented in **34 countries**, driving inclusive digital transformation.

173. **UNESCO Sets Global Standard with Groundbreaking AI Ethics Framework.** In November 2021, UNESCO produced the first-ever global standard on AI ethics, the "Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence", adopted by all 193 Member States. This landmark framework prioritizes the protection of human rights and dignity, emphasizing fundamental principles like transparency, fairness, and human oversight of AI systems. The Recommendation's impact is amplified by its extensive Policy Action Areas, enabling policy-makers to translate core values into actionable strategies across various sectors, including data governance, environmental sustainability, gender equality, education, research, and health and social wellbeing.



UNESCO's AI Tools Catalyse Ethical AI Governance in Chile and Beyond.

In Chile, UNESCO's Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) has catalysed transformative change in AI governance. Following the RAM country report's concrete recommendations, the Chilean National Congress passed the Bill for Cybersecurity and Critical Information Infrastructure, strengthening the nation's digital resilience. The RAM's insights do not only contribute to the revision of Chile's National AI Strategy and action plan, but also build the basis for its proposed AI Law, ensuring ethical considerations are at the core of AI development and deployment.

Chile's leadership in ethical AI extends to the regional level, with the historic Santiago Declaration adopted during the first Latin American and Caribbean Ministerial and High-Level Summit on the Ethics of AI. This declaration, championed by Chile, highlights the urgent need to promote ethical AI across the region, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among nations.

UNESCO's partnership with Chile exemplifies the transformative potential of ethical AI governance frameworks. By empowering countries with the tools and guidance to navigate the complexities of AI, UNESCO is driving a paradigm shift towards responsible, inclusive, and human-centred AI for the benefit of all.

174. **UNESCO Equips 50 Countries with Tools for Ethical AI Governance.** UNESCO has been leading a global shift towards ethical AI governance in partnership with over 50 countries. Through new frameworks and tools such as the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, the Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM), and the Ethical Impact Assessment (EIA), UNESCO supports countries to harness AI benefits while addressing the associated

risks. This initiative is shaping national AI policies in Chile, Senegal, Morocco, and Brazil, ensuring alignment with international ethical standards.

175. UNESCO Shapes Global AI Governance Through G7 and G20 Partnerships. As a knowledge partner to the G7 and G20 Presidencies, UNESCO is actively shaping international AI governance discourse. The UNESCO Recommendation has been included in the G7 ministerial declaration on digital, technology, and industry. Additionally, UNESCO is collaborating with the OECD to develop an ethical AI toolkit for the public sector. UNESCO's expertise also informs the G20's digital economy working group, with initiatives focused on addressing AI and inequalities.

176. UNESCO Supports AI Supervision Across the European Union. UNESCO is actively supporting the competent authorities on AI across the EU in AI supervision. This involves monitoring, controlling, and guiding AI systems to ensure their safe and ethical operation. Oversight occurs at all stages of an AI system's lifecycle—development, deployment, and operations—to ensure compliance with ethical standards, transparency, safety, and regulatory requirements. This initiative is a joint effort with the Dutch Authority for Digital Infrastructure (RDI) and members of the Dutch and European Working Groups of Competent Authorities on AI, funded by the European Commission DG Reform. The project aims to enhance the capacity and expertise of Competent Authorities on AI to ensure that AI systems comply with the EU AI Act and UNESCO's Ethics Recommendation on AI.

177. UNESCO Partners with Private Sector to Promote Ethical AI Practices. UNESCO established a Business Council with the private sector to promote ethical practices within the AI industry. By working closely with UNESCO and committing to the values and principles outlined in the UNESCO Recommendation, these major multinational companies aim to ensure that AI is developed and utilized in a manner that respects human rights and upholds ethical standards. The Business Council, currently co-chaired by Microsoft and Telefonica, includes members such as Salesforce, Init, LG AI Research, and Telstra.



UNESCO Ensures that AI Upholds Rule of Law and Human Rights.

UNESCO is leading a global movement to ensure that artificial intelligence (AI) is used in the judiciary system in a way that upholds the rule of law and protects human rights. The Organization's Global Toolkit on AI and the Rule of Law equips judges, prosecutors, and public servants with the knowledge and tools to harness the potential of AI while safeguarding against its risks, such as algorithmic bias and discrimination.

UNESCO's initiatives have already reached over 5,900 judicial operators in 141 countries through its Global Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on AI and the Rule of Law. As the Organization continues to organize trainings, webinars, and multi-stakeholder forums, judges worldwide are becoming better equipped to handle cases involving AI, ensuring that the technology is used fairly and transparently.

By empowering judicial operators to uphold the rule of law in the age of AI, UNESCO is contributing to the creation of more just and equitable societies. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into our daily lives, UNESCO's pioneering efforts offer hope, guiding us towards a future in which AI and the rule of law coexist harmoniously, serving the interests of justice and the well-being of all.

178. UNESCO Leads Ethical Guidance on Neurotechnology and Emerging Sciences. UNESCO is at the forefront of ethical considerations in neurotechnology, raising awareness through key publications like "Unveiling the Neurotechnology Landscape" and fostering multistakeholder dialogues. UNESCO's advisory bodies, COMEST and IBC, provide essential ethical guidance on emerging technologies, life sciences, and climate change, influencing governance discussions at global forums such as COP27 and COP28. In 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General highlighted neurotechnology as a frontier human rights issue in his Common Agenda. He established a working group co-led by UNESCO and the EOSG, including other UN organizations like the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Within this framework, UNESCO convened interdisciplinary experts to present key findings and

recommendations from IBC reports and to advance a coordinated UN approach to neurotechnology governance. Consequently, UNESCO was entrusted with leading this workstream.

179. UNESCO Framework Equips Policy-makers in 40 Countries with Digital Skills. UNESCO's Transformative AI and Digital Transformation Competency Framework has been equipping policy-makers from more than 40 countries with essential digital skills. Launched in 2022 and developed with global experts, the framework is revolutionizing digital governance worldwide by providing civil servants with crucial skills for the digital age, including training on inclusive digital transformation. Presented to over 2,000 stakeholders, the framework includes an assessment methodology piloted with policy-makers, driving forward effective and inclusive digital governance.



UNESCO Is Shaping the Ethical Frontiers of Global Technology.

For more than three decades, UNESCO has been in the forefront of ethical guidance in science and technology, leveraging its unique position as the world's sole intergovernmental organization dedicated to bioethics and the ethics of scientific innovation. In an era of rapid technological advancement, UNESCO's efforts to ensure scientific and technological progress aligns with human values and rights is essential.

At the heart of UNESCO's approach are two pivotal advisory bodies: the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST). These multidisciplinary groups, composed of independent experts, have been instrumental in anticipating ethical challenges and providing concrete recommendations that bridge the gap between technological advancement and human rights.

The impact of UNESCO's work is evident in the 12 forward-looking reports and statements published on crucial topics such as AI ethics, neurotechnology, and climate engineering. These publications have not only informed global discourse but have also paved the way for groundbreaking standard-setting instruments. A prime example is the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, a landmark achievement in global tech governance.

UNESCO's influence extends to critical global forums, with COMEST's report on climate engineering shaping policy dialogues at COP27 and COP28, demonstrating the Organization's ability to translate ethical considerations into actionable policies on the world stage.

By fostering a multicultural, multidisciplinary, and pluralistic approach, UNESCO ensures that the ethical debate surrounding technology transcends mere technical considerations. Instead, it places human rights, fundamental freedoms, and societal well-being at the core of scientific progress, embodying UNESCO's mission to link technological development with universal values.

180. UNESCO Drives Inclusive Digital Transformation in 34 Countries. UNESCO has promoted inclusive digital transformation in 34 countries through evidence-based internet policies. Utilizing the Internet Universality (IUI) ROAM-X Indicators framework, UNESCO supported these countries in assessing their national internet environments and policies. These assessments provided recommendations to enhance internet development, address digital divides, and foster inclusive digital transformation. From Burkina Faso to Uruguay, UNESCO's IUI assessments are driving evidence-based policymaking for a human-centred internet that aligns with the SDGs.



UNESCO is co-chairing the UN Interagency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence.

Since 2021, UNESCO has been at the forefront of the UN system's coordinated AI action. The Organization co-chairs the Interagency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence (IAWG-AI) with the ITU, which comprises 47 UN agencies. The IAWG-AI's achievements include establishing the Principles for the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in the United Nations System. Firmly based on UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, the principles are endorsed by the UN System Chief Executives Board (CEB), underscoring the UN system's commitment to UNESCO's approach to ethical AI.

The IAWG-AI also developed the UN System White Paper on AI Government, a comprehensive document that examines the UN system's existing institutional models, functions, and international frameworks pertinent to global AI governance. The White Paper has significantly contributed to global AI governance discourse on this topic, including the Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Body report on AI.

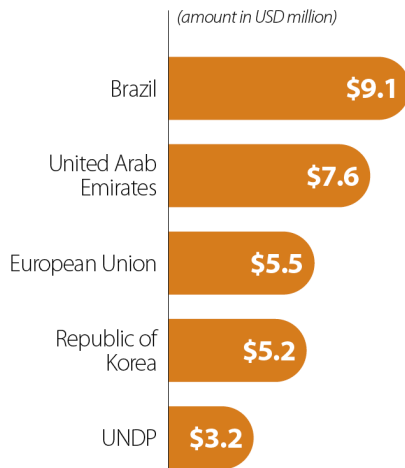
UNESCO's role as co-chair allows the Organization to steer interagency cooperation on AI with concrete outcomes that contribute to coordinated tools and policies. Through the IAWG-AI, UNESCO, UNDP, and ITU have committed to leveraging their AI assessment tools to support Member States in strengthening governance efforts and ensure that AI accelerates productivity and development outcomes while respecting human rights and dignity.

Strategic Objective 4

Partnerships



TOP 5 DONORS



HIGHLIGHT

Received
\$54.2 million
in voluntary contributions,
3% of total funds mobilized

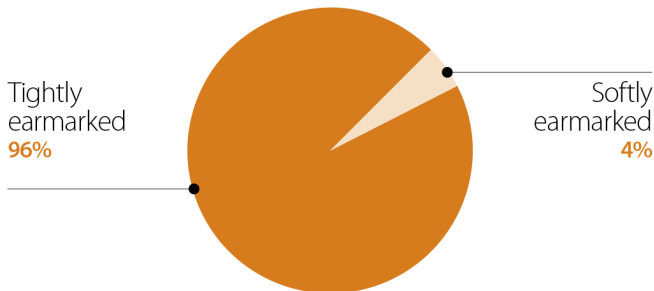


This Strategic Objective is funded by a **highly diverse mix of donors**, such as governments, private sector and multilaterals, enhancing the opportunities for further funding

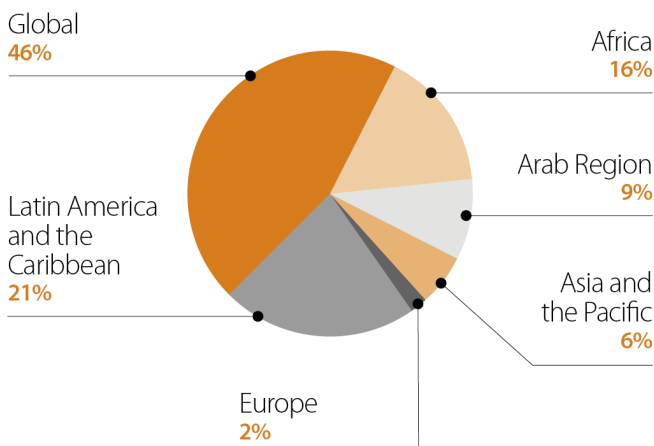


RESOURCES MOBILIZED

Modality

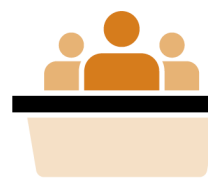


Beneficiary Regions



Partner engagement

in 2020-2023 expected to translate into enhanced resource mobilization based on strong co-creation and ownership



UNESCO leverages industry leader expert panels to enhance programme impact and influence – The Business Council for the Ethics of AI,

co-chaired by Microsoft and Telefonica, promote ethical AI practices, provide strategic insights, foster partnerships and mobilize resources. By engaging private sector expertise, UNESCO gains valuable recommendations and opportunities for industry collaboration, strengthening its impact.

Catalytic philanthropic partnership

(\$2.5 million) with Patrick J. McGovern Foundation enables translating Recommendation on the Ethics of AI into country-specific strategies, “proof of concept” setting a strong foundation for scaling up through Government and other sources of funding

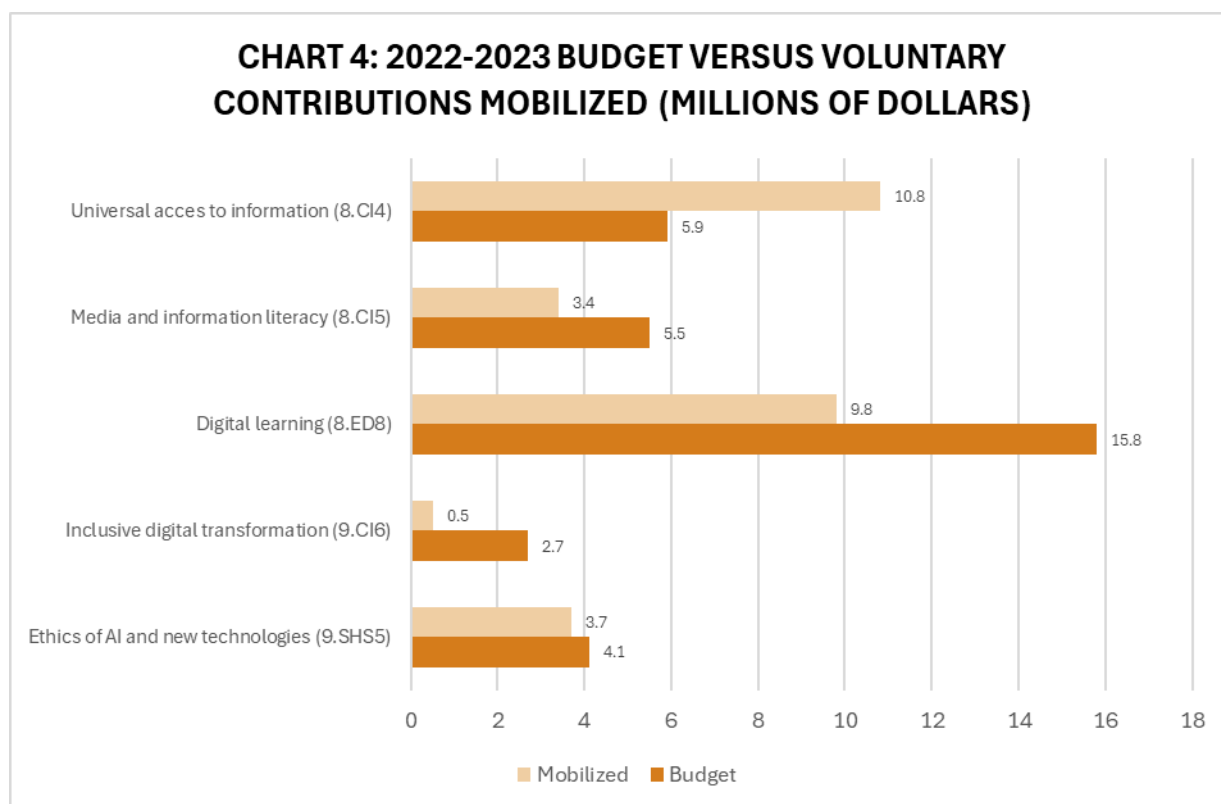


Funding Gap Analysis for Voluntary Contributions 2022 – 2023²⁴ The Untapped Potential²⁵

181. The COVID-19 pandemic and recent technological advancements, particularly in AI, have created momentum for UNESCO’s strategic positioning in this area. Despite successful resource mobilization, several key areas still remain underfunded:

- Despite significant momentum, the funding target for implementing the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence was not fully met, limiting UNESCO’s ability to support its rollout.
- Digital skills development remains significantly underfunded, hindering efforts to enhance skills in developing countries that could improve public sector effectiveness and responsiveness, address youth employment issues, and reposition the cultural industry.
- Although UNESCO’s support has helped countries adopt open education solutions, inadequate resources limit their implementation.
- Despite increased interest among donors to support digital transformation and inclusive AI, resources are insufficient to translate into impact at scale.
- Strengthening national capacities and policies for media and information literacy has also received fewer resources than needed. As a result, efforts have been focused on Priority Africa, SIDS, and gender equality as much as possible, with potential still untapped.

CHART 4: 2022-2023 BUDGET VERSUS VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS MOBILIZED (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)



²⁴ While the SRR covers the period from 2020 to 2023, outputs were revised for the second biennium, making it difficult to combine the two periods for budget and resource mobilization comparisons. The focus on 2022-2023 allows to analyse the latest trends in terms of funding gaps.

²⁵ Please also refer to the Methodology Section following the Executive Summary for more information on the funding analysis.

Lessons Learned – Strategic Objective 4

 RELEVANCE	 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the critical role of technology for ensuring access to education, also revealing the risks associated with the digital divide and the need for guidance on how digital transformation can contribute to wider systemic efforts to improve learning for all. → The demand for media and information literacy support by countries significantly increased in a context where the global pivot to “digital” was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, accompanied by an exponential rise in mis- and disinformation and online hate content. → There is an urgent need to strengthen Member States’ capacities and policies to benefit from AI while addressing associated risks, including inequalities and discrimination biases. → With the increased use of digital content, open solutions like Open Educational Resources (OER) and preservation of documentary heritage have become more viable and relevant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Strong reputation and convening power allow UNESCO to bring together diverse stakeholders on complex and sensitive emerging topics, such as AI. → UNESCO’s history of ensuring ethics as a compass for sciences and technologies was leveraged for the development of the 2021 Recommendation on Ethics of AI. → UNESCO developed the first global standard-setting instruments on OER, AI ethics, and documentary heritage. → To facilitate implementation, UNESCO has a unique global network of 36,500 judicial operators to carry out activities across 141 countries on programmes of AI and rule of law. → UNESCO’s ROAM-X framework is the only international system dedicated to monitoring national internet environments. → UNESCO’s ICT Competency Framework for Teachers remains the unique framework for guiding development of teacher training for digital competences. → UNESCO is recognized for its intellectual leadership and valued by partners for its neutrality, which are essential elements to advance MIL. → UNESCO leads, together with UNICEF, the Gateway Initiative on TES commitments on digital learning content and development of norms and standards for public digital learning platforms.
 CAPACITY TO DELIVER	 SUSTAINABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UNESCO needs to create a more agile space to address technological transformation, as the pace of technological change creates gaps between tested innovations and emerging solutions. → The ethics of AI has generated ambition and demand from the field that require enhanced fund raising. → The use of UNESCO’s networks of partners is critical for outreach, access to specialized expertise, and ultimately impact, especially when resources are limited. → The current attention on digital transformation has significantly increased competition to obtain dedicated funding, making it fundamental to leverage existing partnerships in this field by aligning objectives. → The production of implementation tools (e.g., the Readiness Assessment Methodology and the Ethical Impact Assessment) is a critical contribution to streamline standards and achieve impact. → Inter-sectoral collaboration and knowledge sharing between HQ and field offices is needed to enhance coherence, synergies, and visibility, as well as to boost field offices’ capabilities for maximum impact (e.g., the awareness and expertise on MIL across field offices in uneven). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased national ownership of MIL, demonstrated by the upward trends in the number of countries putting mechanisms in place to support MIL policies. → Broad-based stakeholder engagement leads to more robust and more widely accepted outcomes in the debate about the development of the ethics of AI. → Capacity-building tools designed to be adaptive and openly licensed can contribute to impact by facilitating dissemination, customization, and transfer to local stakeholders. → Field offices play a key role in contextualizing and implementing global initiatives on digital transformation and AI at country level based on national priorities and contexts. → Pre-defined exit strategies are not necessarily the right response to the fast-evolving nature of technology, which necessitates evolving but continuous engagement and capacity building. → The institutionalization of UNESCO’s initiatives at national level facilitates sustainability, e.g., by integrating the work with judicial training institutions into national training programmes

UNESCO's Global Priorities

- ▶ Africa
- ▶ Gender Equality

Africa



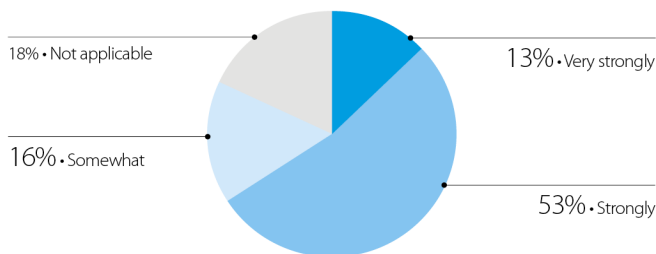
TOP 5 RESULTS (In 2020-2023)

- 1 African Union featuring UNESCO Flagship Programmes (Campus Africa & General History of Africa) in AU Declaration on Transforming Education in Africa conference and UNESCO co-chair of AU Year of Education 2024 working group with AU.
- 2 First-ever Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap is mobilising partners around common priorities to realize “the science we need for the ocean we want”.
- 3 Milestone of 100 sites on World Heritage List reached for Africa.
- 4 22 African countries are implementing the Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence.
- 5 Over 350 judicial operators from 15 countries in Africa trained on AI and rule of law.

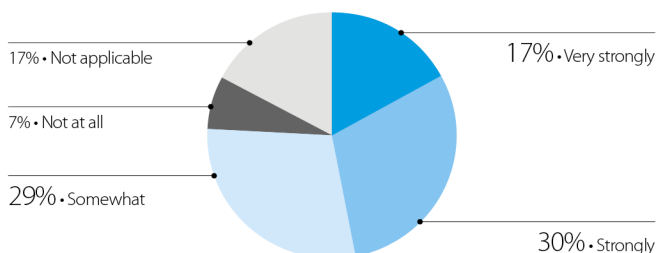


MEMBER STATES SAY

Africa as a global priority has increased UNESCO's focus on Africa



Africa as a global priority is highly relevant to their national priorities



UNESCO'S POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Only UN agency with Africa

as a Global Priority since 1989



Group of Friends for Priority Africa

- > Created in 2022
- > 130 Member States from all regions

“Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029”, comprising 5 Flagship Programmes



Dedicated Division for Priority Africa Coordination

with 8 staff and network of 30 Sectors focal points at HQ & Field Offices

16 Field offices in Africa

out of 54 globally, representing 32% of Field staff workforce (as of 31 December 2023)



Over \$380 million invested in Africa-related work over 2020-2023



Africa largest beneficiary region of UNESCO's voluntary contributions

Gender Equality



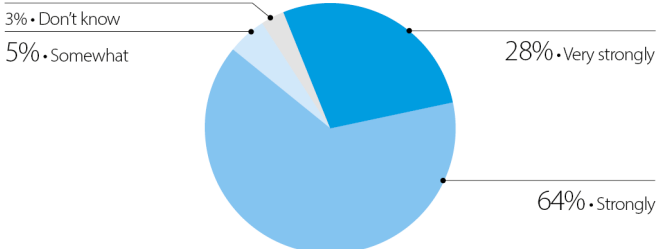
TOP 5 RESULTS (In 2020-2023)

- 46 million learners** now have access to quality gender transformative teaching and learning.
- 62 countries** strengthened capacities to address challenges related to women and girls in natural hazards and climate change.
- 45 countries** revised national STEM education to address gender disparities.
- 60 countries** implemented UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists with focus on safety of women journalists.
- 37 countries** implemented policies to support gender equality in the culture and creative sectors and improve working conditions of women culture professionals.

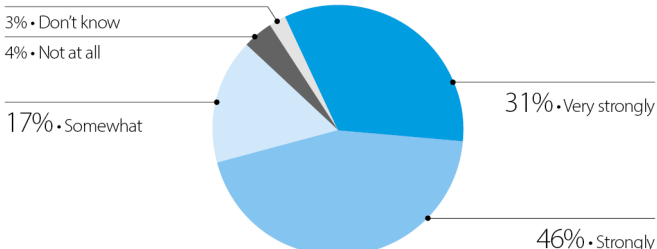


MEMBER STATES SAY

Gender equality as a global priority has increased UNESCO's focus on gender equality



Gender equality as a global priority is highly relevant to their national priorities



UNESCO'S POLITICAL COMMITMENT



Dedicated Gender Team with 5 HQ staff, making gender equality a priority for everyone in the organization

A new global **Gender Equality Strategy Framework and Markers** (2023) to better track gender results and budgeting

Increased compliance with UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality Programming : **81%** in 2020 up to **88%** in 2023 (UN system average at 74%)

Over **\$400** million spent for Gender Equality-related work over 2020-2023

16% of UNESCO's budget for gender equality in 2020-2023 Among the highest across UN System

Regular budget increase for Gender Equality Division **\$1 million** per biennium (2020-2023) **\$5 million** per biennium (2024-2025)

UNESCO's Priority Groups

- ▶ Small Island
Developing States
- ▶ Youth

Small Island Developing States



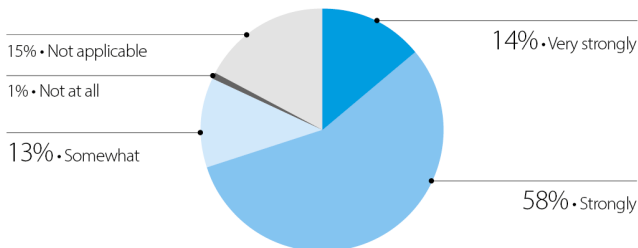
TOP 5 RESULTS (In 2020-2023)

- 1 **20 SIDS countries** are strengthening ESD, greening education and experimenting environmental education using UNESCO designated sites.
- 2 **215 Caribbean and European cultural institutions** strengthened capacity on heritage conservation and creative work, benefitting 1,300 cultural actors mobility and market access. Strengthened regional integration in Caribbean SIDS, through UNESCO/EU Transcultural Programme.
- 3 **13 SIDS countries** enhanced crisis preparedness and response through community radio for timely and accurate information in times of crisis.
- 4 **18 SIDS countries** developed disaster-risk-reduction measures (e.g., cross-sectoral development strategies, early warning systems, recovery and reconstruction frameworks).
- 5 **48 communities** of which 13 are Small Island Developing States and Territories expanded Tsunami Ready Recognition Programmes

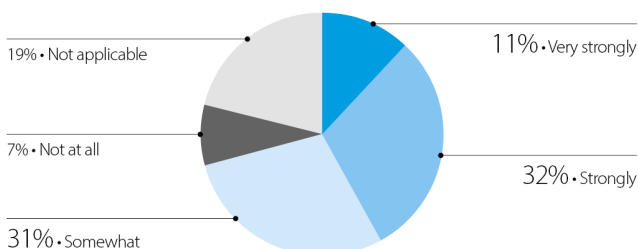


MEMBER STATES SAY

Adoption of the SIDS Operational Strategy has increased the programmatic focus placed on SIDS in UNESCO



UNESCO's SIDS Operational Strategy is highly relevant to their country's national priorities



UNESCO'S POLITICAL COMMITMENT



Group of Friends of SIDS

> Created in March 2022
> 54 Member States from all regions



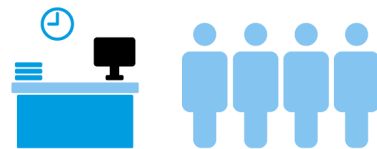
New Operational Strategy for SIDS 2023-2029

& 6 Accelerator Programmes, with a Partnership and Resource Mobilization Plan.

The powerful strategic partnership between

SIDS Coalition for Nature and the Ocean Decade Alliance

enables accelerated ocean action to address challenges affecting SIDS.



Dedicated SIDS Section

within the Science Sector with 4 staff



Network of 44 field staff

in Caribbean and Pacific SIDS and 81 field staff

in Field offices covering SIDS

Over **\$50.7** million spent for SIDS-related work over 2020-2023

Youth



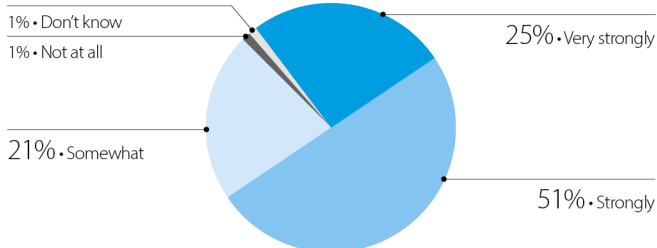
TOP 5 RESULTS (In 2020-2023)

- 331 youth leaders** mobilized through UNESCO Youth Forum in 2021 and 2023, with a first youth dialogue with 27 Youth ministers and other high-level government representatives in 2023.
- 10,000 young people** mobilized in the "Youth As Researchers on COVID-19" global initiative, and 585 young people conducted research, bringing in youth concerns and analyses to set policy agendas.
- 10,000 youth participants** benefitted from Master Classes on Racism and Discrimination between 2020 and 2023.
- 130,000 youth and community members** benefiting from the Global Grant Scheme through UNESCO's supported youth led initiatives in LAC, with positive social and environmental impact.
- 6,000 young people** in Yemen trained and participated in historical building restoration through UNESCO's Cash for Work project, promoting livelihood opportunities for urban youth in Yemen.

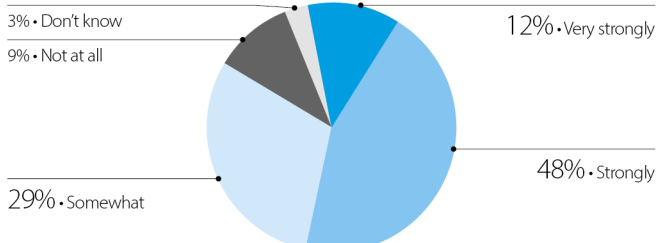


MEMBER STATES SAY

Adoption of youth as a Priority Group has increased UNESCO's inclusion of youth voices and perspectives in its interventions and programmes



Youth as a Priority Group of UNESCO has helped raise awareness of their country about the importance of youth



UNESCO'S POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Dedicated Youth Section

with 5 staff and a network of more than 80 Youth Focal Points at Headquarters, Field Offices and in Category 1 Centres and Institutes. More than 350 staff trained on working with young people in UNESCO programmes



UNESCO's youth coalitions /networks across programmes, giving young people a voice:

- UNESCO Youth Climate Action Network (YoU-CAN),
- SDG4 Youth & Student Network,
- Groundwater Youth Network (GWYN),
- the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Youth Network,
- the Pan-African Youth Network for a Culture of Peace (PAYNCoP),
- Caribbean Risk and Disaster Management Network (CARIDIMA), etc.



Almost **17,000 young leaders** worldwide engaged with the cross-disciplinary Global Youth Community of which almost 650 are already working together to support youth engagement.

Leadership role in setting the youth agenda at UN level:



- Major contributions** to Chapter 4 of the Pact for the Future, on Youth and Future Generations, and the Declaration on Future Generations
- Top 8 ranking**, out of 50 for the implementation of the UN Youth Strategy – Youth 2030 in 2023
- Co-lead of youth taskforces in **9 UN Country Teams**

Over **\$185.3** million spent for Youth-related work over 2020-2023

Strengthening Institutional Performance

Enabling environment for
efficient and effective delivery

To Maximize Programme Impact

182. From 2020 to 2023, UNESCO concluded its Strategic Transformation, launched in 2018. The special efficiency push helped put in place significant steps to enhance the Organization's effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency, contributing to greater programme delivery.

UNESCO is reorganizing its field network to boost programme impact at country level.

- ↳ To maximize UNESCO's programme impact at country level, UNESCO's Executive Board approved in 2022 a reorganization of its field network to include 20 Regional Offices, 30 National Offices and 4 Liaison Offices.
- ↳ Since then, UNESCO has transformed thematic regional bureaux into regional offices, created functional balance between regional offices through redeployment of staff, strengthened coordination with regional development and cooperation structures and trained senior field office managers.
- ↳ During 2020-2023, 42 field offices on average were supported with seed funding to support resource mobilization efforts, with 12 offices benefiting from resource mobilization experts.
- ↳ Resource mobilization in the field has increased from \$210.2 million in 2020 to \$222.2 million in 2023. Decentralized resource mobilization represented 62% of total voluntary resources mobilized in the past biennium.
- ↳ Decentralization of funds to the field has increased from 57.2% during 2020-2021 to 58.4% during 2022-2023.
- ↳ For the 2024-2025 period, an additional 60 posts in Field Offices were approved for creation in 42 C/5, of which 33 new posts to cover Major Programmes and IOC, while the remaining posts would support administrative and financial management capacities in the field, in line with UN inter-agency standards.

UNESCO is enhancing programme coherence, oversight, and performance monitoring to achieve greater impact.

- ↳ UNESCO established a dedicated corporate Programme Coordination Group (PCG) in 2023 to strengthen strategic coordination in the Organization. Since its establishment in December 2023, the PCG has already met five times. Chaired by DIR/BSP, the Group reviews overall programme coherence, promotes inter-sectoral programming, regularly monitors programme performance to identify corporate bottlenecks, and identifies and follows up on programme related risks.
- ↳ A dedicated Committee for the Review of High-Risk Projects (CRHRP), ensuring strengthened risk anticipation and project oversight, has been fully operational since May 2022. Close to 60 projects totalling more than \$420 million were reviewed through a cross-functional consultation during 2022 and 2023 to determine the need for escalation to the CRHRP. Since its creation, the Committee has reviewed 13 projects with a high-risk rating.

- ↳ UNESCO is in the process of developing a new Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework, in line with UN system-wide standards, with an expected completion date of mid-2024. Roll out will start in the Fall of 2024.
- ↳ UNESCO is transitioning to a new corporate planning, monitoring and reporting system (Core Planner and Core Manager) for strengthened programme planning and implementation. The corporate system is expected to increase transparency by making available programmatic and financial information of UNESCO's programmatic actions via Core Portal on a quarterly basis and also strengthen monitoring and reporting better results.

UNESCO is capitalizing on the UN system to strengthen the impact of its mandates.

- ↳ During 2020-2023, UNESCO mobilized \$161.6 million from UN partners, including \$53.8 million from global and country-specific UN pooled funding, \$63.7 million from UN-to-UN agreements, \$20.9 million from Education Cannot Wait, and \$23.1 million from the Global Environment Facility.
- ↳ UNESCO also started strategic dialogues with other UN agencies to identify further areas of complementarity. A pilot with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is underway.
- ↳ UNESCO strengthened its engagement with UN Multi-Partner Trust Funds (MPTF). UNESCO became a member of the governance of the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) and launched the Nature Investment Facility together with UNCDF and UNDP to drive investments in natural World Heritage sites. It has also laid the ground for a possible MPTF on Greening Education.
- ↳ UNESCO participates in 113 UNSDCFs and 125 UNCTs (as of December 2023).
- ↳ UNESCO has ringfenced 1% of its activity budget to support strategic engagement of its field offices in UN processes.
- ↳ UNESCO was among the top nine contributors (out of 21 contributors) to the RC system in 2022 and 2023 (\$3,744,905 of annual contribution). In 2024, UNESCO paid again the same amount of \$3,744,905.
- ↳ Five UNESCO Regional Offices (Bangkok, Beirut, Dakar, Santiago, and Venice) have been strengthened with dedicated liaison officers to act as UNESCO representatives in UN coordination mechanisms.
- ↳ UNESCO was designated as lead/co-lead UN agency for two international years (2021 International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development and 2022 International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development) and two international decades (2022-2032 International Decade of Indigenous Languages, United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030), attesting to the trust of the international community in UNESCO's convening power and expertise.
- ↳ Through its co-chairing of two groups of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), UNESCO co-leads inter-agency work on frontier topics such as AI ethics and future generations, developing reference principles and future-oriented policy guidance.
- ↳ Several key UNESCO topics are shaping discussions on the Pact for the Future: the emphasis on future generations, inspired by the groundbreaking 1997 UNESCO Declaration on Future Generations, the focus on science for policy-making, and the importance of ethically guided digital and frontier technologies.
- ↳ UNESCO was the first UN agency to submit the UN checklist for UNSDG entities on their contribution to the repositioning of the UN development system to its Executive Board.

UNESCO is amplifying its impact through strategic communications and public outreach.

- ↳ UNESCO's groundbreaking corporate campaign "Sharing Humanity" totaled over 150 million views on social media and the internet.
- ↳ By the end of 2023, UNESCO had 14.7 million social media followers, representing a 29% increase (+3.3 million) compared to the end of 2020.
- ↳ Over 1.1 million media articles mentioned UNESCO in 2023, an all-time high and a 47% increase (+354,000) compared to 2020. UNESCO's website received on average of 4.4 million unique visitors per month in 2023, compared to 3.4 million per month in 2020, a 29% increase. 14.6 million page views per month were recorded in 2023, a 51% increase compared to 2020.
- ↳ Seven strategic media partnerships have been signed to amplify UNESCO's messages, including with Netflix on African cinema and a prime-time France Television special on the ocean.
- ↳ UNESCO has also been increasing visibility for its partners. A first pilot was launched in 2023 with the five Nordic countries, featuring a dedicated web page and a social media campaign (#UNESCOxPartners). It reached over 400,000 people and was highly appreciated by the Nordic audience. Building on this success, UNESCO is planning at least five donor visibility campaigns in 2024.
- ↳ Corporate communications have been streamlined, through stronger and more coherent visual identity and branding, for all UNESCO Institutions and Field Offices
- ↳ UNESCO's digital landscape has been revamped, bringing together dispersed sites into one integrated UNESCO digital ecosystem, as well as investment into future-ready digital skills.
- ↳ UNESCO invested in better communication on impact, both through quantitative results reporting and qualitative (personal) stories of change.



#SharingHumanity: UNESCO's Global Campaign Unites Global Stars.

UNESCO's #SharingHumanity campaign ignited the power of social media to broadcast its mission more dynamically than ever before. The campaign showcased an inspiring collection of videos featuring global celebrities who are passionate about UNESCO's initiatives. In her captivating video, world-renowned surfer Maya Gabeira discussed the critical importance of ocean science and protection efforts for the planet's health. Actor and advocate Forest Whitaker shone a spotlight on UNESCO's dedication to fostering peace and combating racism. Meanwhile, electronic music legend Jean-Michel Jarre praised UNESCO's commitment to empowering artists and protecting creative freedoms.

Filmed against the backdrop of iconic global locations, these compelling videos went viral, amassing an impressive 150 million views across various social media platforms. The #SharingHumanity hashtag spurred a worldwide dialogue, with people sharing their aspirations and efforts for a better future. The campaign not only demonstrated UNESCO's ability to unify influential voices across diverse sectors but also highlighted its skill in utilizing digital tools and creative content to engage new audiences. #SharingHumanity marks just the beginning of UNESCO's innovative approach to expanding its outreach and amplifying its impact globally.

UNESCO is enhancing accountability for transformative results.

- ↳ Legal and ethical frameworks have been strengthened with the finalization of a Handbook for Ethical Conduct published in 2023, the creation in 2020 of UNESCO's first Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy, and the strengthening of the Whistleblower Protection Policy which was updated in 2021.
- ↳ The Ethics Office issued nearly 10,000 training certificates to UNESCO staff for successful completing of trainings under the purview of the Ethics Office. Over 1500 requests were handled by the Ethics Office.
- ↳ UNESCO conducted 23 corporate evaluations, 4 synthesis reports, 3 performance audits, 55 internal audits from 2020 to 2023, enhancing management practices across the Organization.
- ↳ UNESCO has strengthened resource management and accountability by systematically conducting risk assessments on projects and performing due diligence on more than 700 potential partners. As of December 2023, over 50 projects totaling some \$400 million in voluntary contributions were reviewed.

UNESCO is boosting its impact by investing in a dynamic and inclusive workforce.

- ↳ UNESCO adopted a new Human Resources Strategy (2023-2027) that considers broader UN strategies and processes, builds on achievements and lessons learned, represents a strategy for the entire workforce, better supports field operations, and upholds the principles of equity, inclusion and diversity.
- ↳ UNESCO boasts one of the best geographical balances in the UN system, with 80% of all Member States currently represented—nearing its target of 85%. This achievement stands as one of the highest representation ratios within the UN.

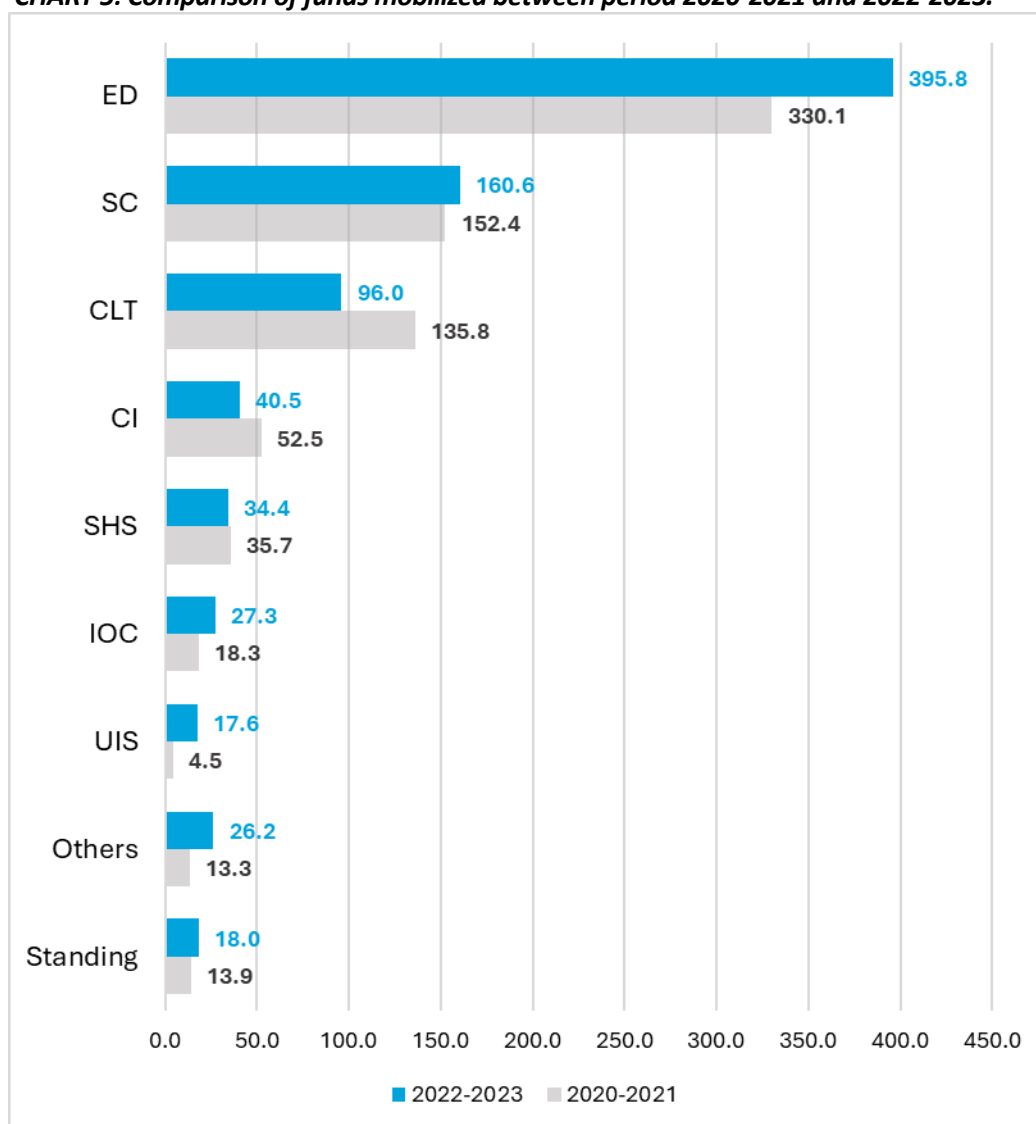
UNESCO has put its financial sustainability on a solid footing, with an increased Regular Budget and an upward trend in voluntary contributions.

- ↳ UNESCO's collection rate for assessed contributions reached a record high over the 2022-2023 period at 97%, significantly higher compared to 70-90% average of the overall UN collection rate.
- ↳ UNESCO's Integrated Budget increased by over \$100 million, from \$1.3 billion for the 2020-2021 biennium to \$1.4 billion for 2022-2023.
- ↳ During the SRR24 period, the project size averaged \$416,295, which is considerably smaller than for comparable UN agencies. More than half of agreements signed were below \$250,000 and represented only 7% of total resources mobilized, increasing transaction costs, and creating risks of programme fragmentation. However, there has been progress: UNESCO signed several new agreements for large-scale projects during the same period with the top 10 agreements all above \$10 million.
- ↳ In the period under review, two Structured Financing Dialogues were organized: in 2020, a Dialogue during the 209th session of the Executive Board to review progress on resource mobilization, share best practice on how to strengthen UNESCO's resource mobilization efforts, and identify areas for strengthened resource mobilization efforts and in 2022, a Structured Financing Dialogue with all Member States to share information on funding needs and opportunities and to advocate for flexible, predictable funding aligned with UNESCO's programme.
- ↳ These Dialogues were complemented by a Partners Forum and Partnerships Hub during the 2023 General Conference to showcase how partnerships have supported UNESCO's impact and increase their visibility.

- ↳ UNESCO has held 33 strategic dialogues with funding partners during the reporting period, including annual dialogues with Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, and Sweden. This practice has been increasingly valued by UNESCO’s top public and private partners and the practice is being expanded to new partners in 2024.
- ↳ UNESCO’s Regular Budget has further increased by \$150.8 million for the period 2024-2025 as a result of the return of the United States, putting the Organization back on a stable regular budget footing.

183. *The following chart* details funds mobilized (new funding agreements signed) across various sectors for the biennia 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. Funds mobilized by the Education Sector significantly increased by 20% from \$330.1 million to \$395.8 million, which represents 48% of the total funds mobilized by UNESCO in the 2022-2023 biennium. This is partly thanks to UNESCO’s leadership role in the Transforming Education Summit as well as shift within the Sector to pursue large scale transformative country operations. Also, most other sectors experienced increases, with Natural Sciences, the International Oceanographic Commission, and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics seeing notable gains. However, Communication and Information, and Culture faced a decline from \$135.8 million to \$96 million and \$52.5 million to \$40.5 million respectively. Note that “Others” represents funds mobilized by UNESCO central services and “Standing” refers to funds mobilized yet to be assigned to specific programmes.

CHART 5: Comparison of funds mobilized between period 2020-2021 and 2022-2023.



The Way Forward

184. Based on the SRR24 review, several key areas have been identified where UNESCO's comparative strengths can make a significant impact on the SDGs and improve the lives of the people it serves. Among these, the following areas stand out as particularly transformative in the current operating environment and given Member States' priorities:

Strategic Objective 1

- **Steering the global education agenda.** UNESCO will continue to stand at the helm of the global education agenda, supporting countries to translate their commitments into action and positioning education at the heart of the post-2030 development agenda. As part of this leadership, UNESCO will continue to advocate for more and better domestic and international financing of education, and for scaling up the quality and availability of data to inform policy decisions.
- **Promoting skills development and lifelong learning for all, with a focus on Africa.** UNESCO will support Member States to meet the challenges of rapidly evolving labour markets, through a lifelong learning approach starting with childhood education and care and extending through adult learning and education. This will include an intensified focus on technical and vocational education and training (TVET); science, technology, engineering and mathematics education (STEM); and higher education. Africa, with its expanding youth population, will be a key focus of UNESCO's efforts, particularly through the Campus Africa programme.
- **Strengthening the quality of education through support for teachers and learning.** UNESCO will further its efforts to increase the supply of qualified, motivated teachers, by improving policies and supporting quality training. UNESCO will also continue support for strengthened curriculum, pedagogy and learning assessments, in tandem with broader education system strengthening.
- **Sports.** UNESCO's Fit for Life programme and the Anti-Doping Convention aim to ensure that sport enables healthy social development and fosters inclusion. These frameworks allow for the creation of strategies capitalizing on sports for social impact, embodying values, ethics and integrity.

Strategic Objective 2

- **Paving the way for the green and digital transitions through education.** UNESCO will expand support on education for sustainable development, including through efforts to help every learner and school get "climate ready" through the Greening Education Partnership. UNESCO will also support countries to leverage technology, including artificial intelligence, to advance education, while also seeking to ensure that digital advancements do not undermine environmental sustainability or human well-being.
- **Ensuring water resilience.** Advancing water resilience by driving cutting-edge hydrological research, promoting integrated water resource management, and fostering international cooperation. These strategies ensure sustainable and equitable water management, addressing global challenges like scarcity and pollution while enhancing cross-border collaboration for effective solutions.
- **Preserving biodiversity, ecosystem health, and geodiversity.** Enhancing conservation and sustainable management through the Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) and Global Geopark Programme, fostering biodiversity protection, ecosystem health, and geodiversity. These initiatives promote international cooperation and innovative solutions to safeguard vital natural resources.
- **Enhancing climate and disaster resilience.** Promoting research, cooperation, climate and disaster resilience by supporting research, fostering international cooperation, and developing early warning systems through its designated sites. These efforts drive sustainable solutions and bolster community preparedness, addressing climate impacts and enhancing global readiness for natural disasters.
- **Promoting science education and capacity building through the International Decade for Science for Sustainable Development.** Through the International Decade for Science for Sustainable Development, UNESCO enhances global knowledge, skills, and international cooperation. This initiative addresses global challenges by fostering science education, developing capacity, and encouraging collaborative research and innovation for sustainable development.
- **Advancing innovation and strengthening STI ecosystems.** Promoting innovation hubs and fostering international collaboration to advance science, technology, and innovation (STI) ecosystems. These efforts

enhance global STI capacities, drive technological advancements, and facilitate sustainable development through cross-border partnerships and innovative solutions to complex challenges.

Strategic Objective 3

- **Harnessing the power of education for peace.** UNESCO will champion education for peace, human rights and sustainable development, and support countries to counter violence, intolerance, discrimination and hate speech through the power of education. All learners will be empowered to become global citizens and change agents, and Universities will be leveraged as catalysts for peace and social transformation. Across all its efforts, UNESCO will also strengthen its focus on inclusive education, ensuring that no learner is left behind, including those in crisis and disaster-affected contexts.
- **Protecting and promoting culture in emergencies.** Significant efforts will be made to further strengthen preparedness (both for human induced disasters and natural disasters) as well as to fully integrate culture into emergency preparedness and response for disasters and emergencies of various kinds, in addition to reconstruction and recovery efforts across the globe.
- **Positioning culture as a standalone goal in the post-2030 development agenda.** Encourage governments to strengthen capacities to harness culture for sustainable development, and to attract the necessary policy attention and investment to overcome structural challenges in the cultural sector, including by leading discussions on the definition of this goal during MONDIACULT 2025.
- **Strengthening the role of culture for multilateral cooperation.** Continuous advocacy to enhance the role of culture in protecting human rights, promoting social cohesion, equity, peace, and sustainability at national and international forums such as the G7, G20, G77+ China, HLPF, SEGIB, CECC SICA, Asia and the Pacific Forum.
- **Enhancing cultural policies.** Actively work to enable and support structural, integrated, equity-driven, inclusive and transversal cultural policies, across the different dimensions of culture thus enhancing the impact of culture on key areas of sustainable development.
- **Promote information as a public good and defend the principles of information integrity** by supporting transparency, free, independent and reliable information for all, combating dis/misinformation, advancing media and information literacy, encouraging ethical journalism, and enhancing international collaboration to ensure access to reliable, accurate and multilingual information, including through documentary heritage preservation and access, in line with UNESCO's mandate.
- **Strengthen the integration of communication and media in crisis preparedness, response, and recovery** by promoting inclusive and accurate information dissemination, supporting capacity building of the media, fostering community engagement, and enhancing strategic partnerships to ensure effective and resilient crisis management aligned with UNESCO's mandate. This includes supporting media as a key stakeholder in dialogue on climate change and disaster risk reduction, countering climate disinformation, and protecting the safety of journalists reporting on the environment.
- **Ensure the safety of journalists and media workers** by promoting legal protections, enhancing safety protocols, providing training and resources, supporting independent journalism, and fostering international cooperation to uphold freedom of expression and safeguard media integrity in alignment with UNESCO's mandate.
- **Anti-racism and anti-discrimination.** Developing effective strategies and delivering multistakeholder partnerships to counter racism and discrimination, enhancing intercultural dialogue, promoting gender equality, and understanding history and memory.
- UNESCO will work with youth to develop innovative analyses and solutions to address their complex challenges and to build Member State and stakeholder commitment in prioritizing youth needs and perspectives in economic development and peace-related policies.

Strategic Objective 4

- **Ethics of emerging technologies, including AI.** Supporting Member States with evidence-based policy-making and institutional capacity building to steer the ethical development of emerging technologies, including AI, neurotechnology, quantum computing, and synthetic biology.
- **Advance media and information literacy (MIL) and digital competencies,** and the sustainable integration of MIL across digital platforms, in AI governance, in national and non-formal learning systems, and on the

international development agenda through legislation, policies, strategic partnerships, and resource mobilization. Considering the relevance of MIL to promote equality and fight discrimination online as well as off-line, MIL also contributes to results under Strategic Objective 3.

- **Support Member States' and media's digital transformation** by promoting the adoption of AI and Open Solutions, building capacities, fostering inclusive digital literacy, developing supportive policies, facilitating media viability, operations and editorial practices, as well as fostering international cooperation to drive sustainable development in line with UNESCO's mandate.
- **Leveraging the social and human sciences to create knowledge-based policy solutions** for today's significant challenges. Strengthening the science-policy nexus and protecting scientific freedom and the safety of scientists to address inequalities, climate change, digital transition, and migration.
- **Harnessing artificial intelligence for the culture sector.** A plan of action is being designed to facilitate cultural and linguistic diversity online, fair access to cultural markets and fair remuneration for cultural professionals, to design and implement policies and regulatory frameworks and to build capacity to harness digital technologies for cultural creation and employment, as well as to improve the safeguarding, promotion, digitization, and inventorying of cultural heritage.

Lessons for the Next Four Years

185. The review of UNESCO's programme implementation over the period 2020-2023 highlights many areas of strength, but also confirms where further reinforcements will be needed going forward. In the context of the discussions of UNESCO's new four-year programme and budget, these insights provide important reflection points:

Relevance: How to Seize Our Strategic Moment.

186. **Strengthening Impact Through More Integrated Programming:** UNESCO's mandate remains critically relevant in today's complex global environment, demanding more integrated programme solutions through systems thinking to better align with country needs. The SRR24 period included several successful inter-sectoral programmes, highlighting the benefits of leveraging UNESCO's diverse sectoral expertise. Looking ahead, there is significant value in further strengthening this approach—both across and within sectors—by sharing lessons, tools, and networks and developing more cross-sectoral programmes. Going into the next planning period, it will be beneficial to further assess the outcomes of current inter-sectoral programmes to determine the best strategies for incentivizing and funding integrated solutions throughout the Organization.

187. **Translating Global Leadership into Results at Country Level.** The SRR24 period was characterized by crises, transformations, and uncertainties. At the global level, UNESCO exhibited strong leadership by analysing impacts, advocating for key issues, addressing critical data gaps, and steering global solutions coalitions. Despite this, strong political support for UNESCO's thought leadership did not always translate into the required scale of financial backing, limiting the Organization's ability to achieve at-scale impact at country level. Going forward, this will require a more strategic discussion around required resources and strategies to better fill funding gaps.

188. **Protecting UNESCO's Special Role as a Consensus Building Forum.** Throughout the quadrennium, Member States also successfully re-established UNESCO as a forum for consensus building and a space for multilateral diplomacy, e.g., science diplomacy. This reaffirms the Organization's relevance at a time when such

achievements are increasingly difficult in other multilateral settings. However, this inter-governmental asset needs to be protected and adequately resourced to continue functioning effectively in the future.

189. **Projecting UNESCO's Relevance Into the Future.** UNESCO's relevance must also be projected into future agendas, from the follow-up to the Summit of the Future to discussions on a post-2030 agenda. This requires a forward-looking dialogue with Member States, ensuring that proactive positioning is jointly carried forward by the Secretariat and its membership in Paris and other UN locations. UNESCO's contribution to larger financing discussions for its mandated areas should also be further explored.

Comparative Advantage: How to Turn it into Greater Impact.

190. **Maximizing Awareness of UNESCO's strengths:** UNESCO boasts many unique assets, roles, and technical expertise across its Programme Sectors, yet these complementary strengths are not always well understood by partners, including in the UN system. To leverage UNESCO's comparative strengths for greater impact, better communication and clearer definitions of added value are essential, particularly in engaging new partners.

191. **Strategic Engagement Within the UN System:** While UNESCO's specialized expertise is increasingly sought by other UN agencies, there is still substantial untapped potential. Developing more strategic engagement frameworks with UN agencies that share similar goals will enhance collaboration, reduce transaction costs at the country level, and clarify collaboration priorities across countries.

192. **Leveraging UNESCO's Extensive Network:** UNESCO's vast network, including National Commissions, Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Chairs, ASP-net schools, NGOs in official partnership, and Creative and Learning Cities Networks, is unparalleled in the UN system. It offers an optimization model that can significantly increase, amplify and deepen UNESCO's scale and impact. Numerous examples show how this network adds value to UNESCO's programmes, but the Organization has yet to realize its full potential. Better coordination, greater awareness within the Organization, and dedicated resources to strengthen network connections would further optimize this potential.

193. **Balancing UNESCO's Five Core Functions for Optimal Impact in a Complex World:** UNESCO's five central functions (standard setter, thought leader, convenor, capacity builder and monitor) have been instrumental in establishing its unique strengths. However, differing opinions exist on how these functions should be prioritized. Some advocate strongly for UNESCO's role in setting global standards, while others call for a more pronounced focus on field operations. Striking a balance is essential, especially in the current context where interconnected global challenges demand a systems approach. By effectively balancing these priorities, UNESCO can address diverse needs more comprehensively. This systems approach is critical, as it allows UNESCO to implement strategies that not only solve isolated issues but also enhance overall sustainability and impact across multiple sectors and regions.

Demonstrable Impact: How To Better Capture and Communicate Our Impact.

194. **Strengthening Monitoring of Results and Impact:** There is an urgent need to overhaul UNESCO's strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting frameworks to better track consistent performance across sectors and be able to systematically address performance gaps throughout programme implementation. There is an urgent need for a more integrated monitoring framework with a clearer results chain (including indicators at all levels) supported by guidance for more consistent indicator definitions, marker application and target setting across programme sectors. The monitoring framework should be further streamlined to allow for a simpler application, in line with the Organization's portfolio size. In addition, by more explicitly linking strategic budgeting with results planning, it should be possible to have more informed discussions on the linkages between results achievements and the quality and quantity of resources. Related to the above, reporting would benefit from further alignment with planning cycles, better analysis and streamlining.

195. **Upgrading UNESCO's Strategic Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting Systems:** As UNESCO approaches its next programme and budget cycle, the Organization also has an opportunity to modernize and digitize its 20-year-old corporate planning and monitoring systems. Historical funding constraints have restricted this critical transition, but the new UNESCORE project allows UNESCO to make this critical transition, integrating the latest technology, such as advanced data analytics, to enhance its strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting

capabilities. Additionally, UNESCO needs to strengthen staff skills in these areas, including through leveraging support from other UN agencies to ensure that its workforce is equipped to leverage these new tools effectively. The forthcoming 43 C/5 cycle will put forward new proposals aimed at better aligning UNESCO's monitoring practices with contemporary needs, ensuring that its methods reflect the latest advancements and best practices. This upgrade would not only improve efficiency and transparency but also enable UNESCO to achieve greater impact and better serve its mission in an increasingly digital world.

196. **Measuring Longitudinal Impact:** Many of UNESCO's initiatives aim to influence behavioural changes within complex systems, often requiring extended periods to manifest significant results. However, the current results framework and performance indicators tend to capture only immediate changes, leaving the more profound, longer-term impacts that define UNESCO's enduring influence unrecorded. Given that many of UNESCO's programmes span decades, incorporating a more extensive longitudinal quantitative and qualitative analysis in the second SRR of each medium-term strategy, covering the eight-year period and potentially beyond, would be crucial. This adjustment would highlight the sustained outcomes and effectiveness of UNESCO's work, providing a clearer picture of its long-term impact and reinforcing the importance of measuring these lasting changes to fully understand and communicate the true value of UNESCO's initiatives.

197. **Assessing Impact Beyond Numbers:** As UNESCO works to strengthen its monitoring processes, it is clear that it will also be critical to move beyond mere statistics to capture the real breadth of its influence. Simply tallying the number of individuals trained fails to encapsulate the deeper, wider impact of that training—impacts that ripple out far beyond the immediate participants. The same is true for assessing the effects of UNESCO's publications, events, and campaigns, which can inspire significant shifts in thought, methodologies, and policies. These profound influences often defy traditional measurement, highlighting a critical need for more thoughtful and innovative strategies in UNESCO's upcoming monitoring framework to better mirror the real scope and significance of its work. This would help to better capture and communicate the real scope and significance of UNESCO's work, better showcasing the transformative impact of UNESCO's efforts.

198. **Expanding Feedback Channels for a Fuller Picture of Impact.** A significant challenge in understanding UNESCO's true global impact lies also in the limited scope of direct feedback currently gathered. Predominantly, assessments have relied on limited surveys, which of course do not fully capture the varied experiences of all individuals directly affected by UNESCO's programmes. To address this gap, it would be useful to explore ways to incorporate voices of partners more systematically into impact narratives. This broader approach to gathering feedback is already being piloted across some programmes, but it would be interesting to explore how to integrate such feedback on a corporate scale.

199. **Communicating Impact Effectively:** Effective communication of impact to partners is crucial for reinforcing UNESCO's objectives and garnering continued support. To enhance outreach, UNESCO needs improved reporting formats specifically tailored for key audiences such as policy-makers and parliamentarians. These formats should be designed to clearly convey the significance and outcomes of its initiatives in a manner that resonates with these stakeholders. Collaborating closely with National Commissions will be instrumental in customizing communications to be more impactful and relevant to national contexts, ensuring that our messages are well-received and understood at all levels.

Capacity to Deliver: How To Move to Greater Scale.

200. **Balancing Demand and Capacity:** The SRR24 reporting period highlights that demand for UNESCO's support often surpasses its available resources. For instance, the number of UNESCO designated sites has increased without a corresponding rise in administrative support from the Regular Budget. While this growing demand underscores UNESCO's relevance, it also challenges its delivery capabilities. Addressing these constraints will require more than just improved efficiencies. UNESCO must clearly delineate the costs associated with new or expanded Member State requests, and Member States need to acknowledge that effective results depend on adequate resources. Enhanced cost analysis will be essential for better planning and understanding of needs.

201. **Scaling Up Project Size:** UNESCO's impact is in some cases limited by a high number of small-scale projects. During the SRR24 period, the project size averaged \$416,295 at the end of the biennium, which is considerably smaller than for comparable UN agencies. More than half of agreements signed were below \$250,000 and represented only 7% of total resources mobilized, increasing transaction costs, and creating risks of

programme fragmentation. However, there has been progress: UNESCO signed several new agreements for large-scale projects during the same period with the top 10 agreements all above \$10 million. Looking ahead, consolidating smaller contributions into larger portfolios, or leveraging them as seed resources to pave the way for larger programmes, could enhance impact and efficiency, allowing UNESCO to achieve broader and more significant outcomes.

202. Maximizing Impact Through Strategic Partnerships. The SRR24 reporting period has underscored the considerable potential for UNESCO to expand its scale and enhance its effectiveness by leveraging strategic partnerships. UNESCO's established role as a key convenor and its capacity to attract a diverse range of partners into collaborative efforts are fundamental strengths. The Organization's extensive network of sites and its broad partner ecosystem provide distinctive benefits that can significantly amplify its impact. Specifically, these partnerships have already shown their capability to boost UNESCO's capacity to deliver by bringing in additional expertise and resources, thereby enhancing the Organization's overall effectiveness and reach.

203. Strengthening Operational Efficiency at Country Level: The SRR24 reporting period has clearly shown the importance of UNESCO's field network for the achievement of results, accompanied by a rising demand from partner countries for access to UNESCO's expertise. To align its expertise and support better with country needs, UNESCO needs to further strengthen its coordination between Headquarters and the field, moving towards a more networked thinking of expertise. In addition, further strengthening of programme delivery capacities will be essential, both in the field and Headquarters, to ensure that UNESCO can implement high quality programmes in an effective and timely manner, across a range of country contexts.

Sustainability: How to Protect and Maximize Our Impact.

204. Aligning with National Priorities to Sustain Impact: The sustainability of UNESCO's impact depends significantly on how well its programme objectives are aligned with national priorities. UNESCO's established relationships with government counterparts are key to achieving this alignment. Close coordination between field and Headquarters is essential for this. Moreover, the enduring success of projects also relies on the commitment from national ministries and institutions over extended periods of time and across government administrations. Moving forward, UNESCO will need to further clarify its programme offer at country and regional levels in collaboration with national counterparts. This would also help to further increase funding opportunities at country level and ensure that UNESCO's programmes are effectively tailored to meet national needs.

205. The Importance of Long-Term Funding for Sustainable Impact: Achieving sustainable and long-term development impact necessitates reliable and predictable funding, as significant changes often unfold over extended periods. Programmes such as CapED and O3 highlight the critical role of consistent donor investments over many years in realizing larger-scale impacts. These examples underscore the necessity for open discussions with donors on how to protect sustainable funding streams in difficult fiscal environments to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of UNESCO's programmes, and not jeopardize gains already made.

206. Ensuring Programme Sustainability with Diverse Funding Sources: It is crucial for UNESCO to secure funding from a variety of donors to minimize reliance on a limited number of partners. This diversification helps to mitigate the risks associated with potential shifts in donor priorities. By broadening the funding base, programmes can enhance their stability and adapt more effectively to changes in the funding landscape, ensuring continuous support and smoother operation. The funding mix of critical programmes will need to be more carefully looked at in the future.

207. The Strategic Necessity of Flexible Funding: The need to reduce earmarking and attract more flexible funding is critical for UNESCO to be more agile, respond to emergencies, innovate and leverage opportunities, and ensure programme coherence. While the share of softly earmarked funds has increased in the period in review (from 28% to 41%), much of these funds benefit very specific programmes rather than fully supporting results achievement against a specific output or outcome. Providing flexibility at a higher level, for example at Programme Sector level, is a good practice that needs to be further expanded and replicated.

208. Exit Strategies: The ultimate success story for UNESCO is when interventions initiated through its projects and programmes become self-sustainable. UNESCO will dedicate additional efforts to ensure that exit strategies are thought through and integrated into programming when they can bring value added. Responsiveness to

national and regional priorities and sustained funding to allow the development of the necessary local capacities are critical elements to ensure UNESCO's contribution lasts longer than a project and beyond its direct support. Even when achieved, an exit strategy does not imply UNESCO's disengagement. Strengthened institutions and self-reliant initiatives will be fully integrated in UNESCO's network, benefitting from and contributing to it with their experience and expertise.

209. Ensuring Sustainability Through Effective Communication of Impact: To maintain and secure ongoing support, it is critical that UNESCO effectively communicates the impacts and returns on investments of its projects. Changes in donor governments and shifts in development priorities can lead to fluctuations in funding. UNESCO has experienced challenges in this realm, where unforeseen funding reductions have sometimes jeopardized the sustainability of projects and their outcomes. By enhancing communication strategies to better highlight the tangible benefits and successes of its initiatives, UNESCO can strengthen the case for continued investment, thereby ensuring more stable and sustainable results from its programmes.

Proposed draft decision

210. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 38 C/Resolution 99, 202 EX/Decision 19, 40 C/Resolution 2, 40 C/Resolution 21, 40 C/Resolution 34, 40 C/Resolution 41, 40 C/Resolution 52, 209 EX/Decision 4.I.B and 41 C/Resolution 75,
2. Having examined document 220 EX/4,
3. Noting that the Strategic Results Report 2024 (SRR24) covering the period 2020-2023 constitutes an important element for decision-making and programme priority setting with a view to the preparation of the Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5),
4. Welcomes the presentation of the results against the four Strategic Objectives of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4), which provides a more integrated picture of how UNESCO is leveraging its expertise to address some of today's defining challenges;
5. Acknowledges the challenges that the Secretariat faced in assessing results across two separate medium-term strategies, and as a result of the absence of Outcome-level performance indicators in the respective monitoring frameworks, and notes with appreciation the Secretariat's effort to provide, to the extent possible, an assessment of the high-level changes to which the Organization contributed;
6. Decides to align future Strategic Results Reports (SRRs) with the C/4 document planning cycle so as to avoid reporting across two separate medium-term strategies in the future, and also decides that the C/5 Implementation Report in the year of strategic results reporting be incorporated in that year's SRR;
7. Expresses appreciation to the Director-General for the Member State survey conducted as part of the strategic results review and consultations for the draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) and takes note of the responses provided by Member States;
8. Further expresses appreciation to the Director-General for the results accomplished during the period between 2020-2023;
9. Takes notes with appreciation that the Member State responses to the survey and lessons learned contained in the Strategic Results Report 2024 (SRR24) have informed the Director-General's preliminary proposals for draft document 43 C/5;
10. Requests the Director-General to ensure that the lessons from the Strategic Results Report 2024 (SRR24), the summary of the Executive Board's debate and its decision thereon are duly taken into account in the preparation of draft document 43 C/5.