

PHILOSOPHY



UNESCO



INTERSECTORAL STRATEGY ON PHILOSOPHY

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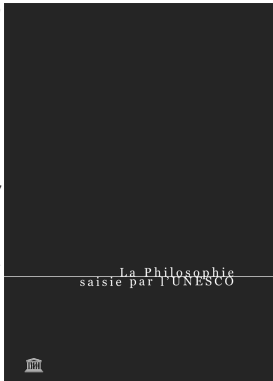
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In 2005 and for the first time in its history, UNESCO adopted an Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy, aiming to establish an institutional framework for its programme in favor of this key discipline in the Social and Human Sciences Sector. This Strategy proved necessary in view of the increasing amount of activities in this field implemented in close cooperation with Member States and a broad number of institutional partners, particularly since the launching in 2002 of the celebration of Philosophy Day at UNESCO.

In 2003 UNESCO published the work entitled « La philosophie saisie par l'UNESCO » which retraces the history of philosophy within the Organization, in a context of historical change and influence of the great philosophical currents of the second half of the 20th century. The English translation will be published in 2006.



It is upon the initiative of Turkey that the project of a strategy concerning philosophy was submitted to the Executive Board of the Organization. During discussions held on this topic at the 169th session of the Executive Board, a great number of its members insisted on the importance of this programme unique within the UN system and essential for the action of UNESCO in its capacity as 'intellectual and ethical conscience' of the United Nations. The representatives of Member States put forward the necessity to reflect together on the formulation of a strategy integrating simultaneously dialogue and philosophical analysis, the encouragement of the teaching of philosophy, the promotion of philosophical thinking and research, all of them reflected in the three pillars of this Strategy.

This Strategy is thus an outcome of a process resulting from broad consultations, numerous debates and exchanges about the priorities that UNESCO must consider for the promotion of philosophy. During two years, Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, National Commissions for UNESCO, more than 500 NGOs, 600 universities and 150 philosophers and eminent personalities from the field of philosophy were invited to express their opinion on the Strategy and to contribute to it.

The Strategy will be implemented in particular within the framework of Major Programme III, in cooperation with other concerned programme sectors as well as National Commissions for UNESCO. Special efforts will be made in order to mobilize the extra-budgetary funds necessary for its implementation.

Being essentially a place for exchange and encounter, UNESCO is well positioned to reflect that 'yearning for philosophy' mentioned by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, UNESCO's Director General, at the opening of Philosophy Day on 18 November 2004. This expression conveys the growing interest for this discipline expressed by young pupils and students sensitive to the problems and challenges arising for humanity today.

Since its inception, UNESCO has endeavored to create a space of debate for all thinkers. One of the major concerns of the Social and Human Sciences Sector is to act as an interface providing philosophers the possibility to establish cooperation frameworks between them in all regions of the world, in terms of university exchanges particularly in the field of research, but also in terms of enrichment and mutual comprehension.

The Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy aims precisely at conveying this dynamic into concrete activities that will boost cooperation and the reciprocal enrichment between philosophers of various regions of the world. Three main pillars of action were thus identified in order to respond in a more appropriate way to the expectations of philosophy experts and advocates of this discipline: (i) *The promotion of dialogue and philosophical analysis of contemporary questions*, a pillar whose priority is the establishment of networks among philosophers, as well as a large public disclosure of the key outcomes of reflection that should influence major decision making in today's societies, such as the concepts of justice and citizenship, the ethical requirements in the field of sciences or the evolution of the history of philosophical ideas, (ii) *The encouragement of the teaching of philosophy* whose crucial role for the development of a free and well informed thought must constantly be underlined, as well as the rigor in the teaching of this discipline in order to guarantee philosophy's total independence and relevance, and (iii) *The promotion and dissemination of philosophical knowledge* in order to make sure that philosophy is accessible to all.

By adopting this Strategy, UNESCO's aim was to put together the programmes developed in this field in a coherent and methodological framework that would follow an integrated and intersectoral procedure aimed at tackling the greatest number of problems challenging the world today.

Moreover, UNESCO's Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy promotes philosophy itself as a true exercise of freedom.

It is the duty of philosophy to extend beyond its own field in order to enlighten all other disciplines as much as possible, thus contributing to the refining and renewal of the analysis of world problems and ongoing changes in all societies.



Pierre Sané
Assistant Director-General
for Social and Human Sciences

INTERSECTORAL STRATEGY ON PHILOSOPHY

*Intersectoral Strategy
on Philosophy
adopted by the Executive
Board of UNESCO
at its 171st session (2005).
Document 171 EX/12*

OVERVIEW: UNESCO'S ROLE

The importance of philosophy to the work of UNESCO is evident, since philosophical analysis and reflection are undeniably linked to the establishment and maintenance of peace, the core mission of the Organization. The Organization's Constitution provides that peace must be founded "upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind". By developing the intellectual tools to analyze and understand key concepts such as justice, dignity and freedom, by building capacities for independent thought and judgment, by enhancing the critical skills to understand and question the world and its challenges, and by fostering reflection on values and principles, philosophy is a "school of freedom".

The necessity of a Philosophy Programme at UNESCO was underscored from the very inception of the Organization. One

of the tasks proposed for UNESCO in 1946 by the Preparatory Commission of the first General Conference of that year was for a philosophy Programme to “imbue the public mind with a certain number of philosophical and moral notions to be regarded as a minimum equipment, and which are calculated to reinforce respect for human personality, love of peace, hatred of narrow nationalism and the rule of brute force, solidarity, and devotion to the ideal of culture”. Philosophy, then, can also be considered a school for human solidarity, and as a basis for better mutual understanding and respect, fundamental to fostering dialogue among civilizations. Any dialogue between cultures as well as reconciliation of communities must be founded on the values of peace and coexistence. Such ethical and principled dialogue presupposes a basic comprehension of the philosophical and moral notions essential to a true inter-subjective and open exchange.

The importance of philosophy was re-affirmed in February 1995, when philosophers gathered in Paris to adopt a Paris Declaration for Philosophy. It was stated that all individuals everywhere should be entitled to engage in the free pursuit of philosophy, and that the teaching of philosophy should be maintained or expanded where it exists, and introduced where it does not yet exist. Moreover, it was stated that the knowledge of philosophical insight in different cultures and their comparison, as well as the analysis of their commonalities and differences, should be supported.

UNESCO interprets philosophy in a broad sense as dealing with universal problems of human life and existence and instilling independent thinking for individuals. Philosophy is at the heart of human knowledge, and its scope is as wide as UNESCO’s own fields of competence. The major issues dealt with by the Organization, such as education for all, cultural diversity, the ethics of science, human rights, knowledge societies, democracy, intercultural dialogue and dialogue among civilizations; need to have a solid philosophical foundation and analytical and conceptual rigour. Critical analysis of the concepts, norms and standards implied in the major programmes of UNESCO is necessary to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the activities.

The UNESCO Philosophy Programme has always aimed at fostering philosophical dialogue and mutual learning of philosophical trends. The present document presents a long-term strategy for the UNESCO Philosophy Programme, and aims at giving coherence to the activities of the Programme. It is the result of a two-year consultation process in which Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, National Commissions for

UNESCO, 500 NGOs and 600 universities, as well as approximately 150 philosophers and eminent personalities, were invited to give comments and suggestions.

Global Aims for the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy:

- To serve as a laboratory of ideas;
- To act as a catalyst for international cooperation on philosophical dialogue, study and research and to nourish the teaching of philosophy and public debate;
- To contribute to international reflection and debate on current world problems, in particular by strengthening the philosophical foundations of UNESCO's major programmes and issues of concern and facilitating debate on philosophical insights with decision-makers;
- To popularize philosophy among the general public;
- To promote the teaching of philosophy in the world, in particular, but not exclusively, through education institutions and to contribute in building capacities in Member States for philosophical scholarship, especially in countries where philosophy is not formally taught;
- To function as a clearing house in all the above-mentioned domains;
- To serve as a catalyst and facilitator to the process of dialogue among civilizations.

Implementation of the Strategy

The assumption is that the present strategy applies to the UNESCO Secretariat and to the National Commissions for UNESCO, and that it will be implemented through close intersectoral collaboration and in partnership with relevant partners (universities, NGOs, institutes, academic societies, UNESCO Chairs, etc.). National Commissions will be invited to set up subcommittees on philosophy in order to:

- Liaise with the Secretariat;
- Disseminate information and materials;
- Promote the teaching of philosophy at secondary and university levels;
- Organize events to promote philosophy.

Particular efforts will be made to mobilize extrabudgetary funds for the implementation of the Strategy.

Expected Results

- Research fostered and disseminated on key issues relative to the priority programmes of UNESCO (education for all, bioethics, knowledge societies, etc.) and to the challenges of contemporary society;

- Publications and textbooks produced from the interregional and inter-cultural philosophical dialogues;
- The teaching of philosophy enhanced internationally at both secondary and university levels;
- The informal teaching and popularization of philosophy regarding the contemporary philosophical debates fostered among the general public;
- Capacities of National Commissions for UNESCO to carry out the Strategy enhanced.

Key Pillars of Action for UNESCO in the Field of Philosophy:

Pillar I Philosophy facing world problems

Pillar II Teaching philosophy in the world

Pillar III Promotion of philosophical thought and research

These three pillars are interconnected, with each pillar nourishing the others. The results of research and dialogues obtained in Pillar I will feed into Pillar II and its programme of teaching philosophy, and into Pillar III and its activities on the promotion of philosophical thought.

PILLAR I

PHILOSOPHY FACING WORLD PROBLEMS DIALOGUE, ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONING OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

UNESCO will support philosophical analysis and research that would focus on contemporary problems and its concrete consequences to social stability and peace-building, starting with UNESCO's priority programmes. Efforts will be made to encourage thinkers to tackle emerging global problems in order to foster new ideas and research. By supporting reflection by philosophers on the major problems facing humanity today, UNESCO will incite philosophers to play an influential role beyond their traditional academic sphere and participate actively in responding to contemporary problems, thus complementing ongoing academic research.

UNESCO, as an intellectual and ethical organization, has a role to play in creating a public space within which dialogue can acquire an authentic international dimension that is open to all. This dialogue, nourished by the concepts and ideas produced by thinkers, should also penetrate the realm of decision-makers, and give inspiration to the general public for action. The connection between reflection, debate and action will be reinforced by bringing together thinkers, policymakers and civil society. The main challenge will thus be to make a link between research and action.

In line with the United Nations Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, the activities in this Pillar will contribute to fostering a genuine process of dialogue by reviewing the concept of, and approaches to, dialogue among civilizations, with a view to broadening its scope and enhancing its relevance to current challenges which humanity is facing. Identification of obstacles to dialogue, analysis of what constitutes dialogue in relation to other forms of communication, and searching for the epistemological foundations of dialogue will be some of the key issues that will be given attention.

The proposed activities include:

- Philosophical reflections and dialogues on the central themes relevant to the priorities of UNESCO: dialogue among civilizations, education for all, bioethics, knowledge societies, cultural diversity, ethics of the environment, poverty, sustainable development, etc.;
- Philosophical reflections and dialogues on the central themes relative to the World Congress of Philosophy:

Philosophy facing world problems, topics such as globalization and responsibility, equality, collective and individual action, identity and justice;

- Interregional Philosophical Dialogues: Launched in 2004, this programme aims at establishing philosophical dialogues among scholars of various regions of the world, e.g. the Arab world and Asia, Africa and Latin America, Africa and the Arab world, Western and Eastern Europe, etc.;
- Virtual Resource Centre: A website containing reference documents, current research papers, summaries of papers presented in various UNESCO conferences and seminars, online discussions and a virtual library would be set up under the section of the UNESCO Philosophy Website to serve researchers, students and scholars in the field of philosophy.

These activities will be implemented in partnership with the relevant UNESCO sectors, NGOs, universities, research institutes and philosophers.

Interregional philosophical dialogues

The aim of the activity entitled 'Interregional philosophical dialogues' is to create networks of philosophers in all areas of the world. A strong need has arisen to create a space for the encounter and exchange between philosophers not having the possibility to meet while practicing and teaching philosophy in their respective countries. UNESCO acts as a catalyst for the encounter between philosophers, philosophical traditions and philosophical experiments, each one contributing to the construction of the values of peace and mutual understanding.

An 'Interregional philosophical dialogue between Asia and the Arab world' was launched in the framework of the celebration of the third Philosophy Day held in November 2004 at UNESCO's Paris Headquarters. A great number of philosophers of the two regions discussed problems common to the practice of philosophy in their respective areas and identified the main lines of action for an optimal way of establishing networks between the two regions. On the initiative of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO participated in the organisation of a conference on 'Democracy and social justice in Asia and in the Arab world' held in November 2005 in Seoul (Republic of Korea), as a follow-up to the 2004 meeting.

The dialogue between the communities of philosophers from a great number of countries composing these two vast regions will lead not only to stronger synergies but also to the elaboration of publications able to satisfy the need for mutual knowledge and necessary interaction.

A philosophical dialogue between Africa and Latin America was also launched in the framework of the 2005 World Philosophy Day celebrated in Santiago (Chile). This meeting allowed for the creation of ties between the philosophical communities of the two regions as well as for a definition of the priorities and challenges common to these two regions. During the meeting, the quality of philosophy teaching and its challenges emerged among the most salient topics.

In accordance with the purpose of the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy, the inter-regional philosophical dialogues will continue between the other different parts of the world, always in accordance with the following principle: to create ties between philosophers in the areas where these still do not exist, and to reinforce the already existing ones.



*Launching of the interregional philosophical dialogue between Asia and the Arab world.
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
16 and 17 November 2004.*



*Launching of the interregional philosophical dialogue between Africa and Latin America
UNESCO Office in Santiago (Chile)
24 November 2005.*

**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY IN THE WORLD
FOSTERING CRITICAL REFLECTION AND INDEPENDANT THINKING**

The teaching of philosophy contributes to the development of free citizens. It “encourages one to judge for oneself, to confront all sorts of arguments, to respect what others have to say, and to submit only to the authority of reason”. In other words, the teaching of philosophy is highly relevant to understanding the world-views and philosophical foundations of human rights, and contributes to building the capacity for individuals to have genuine freedom of thought, freedom from dogmas and unquestioned “wisdom”. It also fosters the ability for a human being to make judgements concerning his/her situation. This is inevitably linked to the possibility for evaluation, critique and choice for action or non-action.

The importance of philosophy education was affirmed in 1950 at the fifth session of the General Conference which decided that UNESCO should make “an inquiry into the place of the teaching of philosophy in the several educational systems, the way in which it is given, and its influence upon the moulding of the citizen” (5 C/Resolution 4.1212). The first survey produced in 1953 under the direction of Georges Canguilhem on nine countries was followed up in 1995, with a more complete survey on 66 countries. However, there has not been a systematic follow-up to the recommendations of the experts on the survey regarding philosophy education.

The proposed activities include:

- Conducting a state-of-the-art assessment and evaluation study on the teaching of philosophy in the world today;
- Developing policy recommendations on the teaching of philosophy at secondary and university levels through the National Commissions for UNESCO. The recommendation package will also include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to inform Member States of the current state of teaching philosophy in the world (in partnership with the UNESCO Education and Culture Sectors);
- Developing recommendations to Member States on comprehensive curriculum development, which would include the teaching of different philosophical trends as well as comparative philosophy;
- Developing manuals, exchange programmes, seminars, etc. in order to foster the teaching of philosophy in the world (in partnership with the UNESCO Education Sector);



*XIIIth International
Philosophy Olympiads (IPO)
Warsaw (Poland) 19 – 23 May 2005*



*Ms Ioanna Kuçuradi (Turkey)
Chairholder of UNESCO Chair in Philosophy
Hacettepe University (Turkey).
She was awarded the UNESCO's Aristotle
medal, in 2003, in acknowledgement
of her work for the promotion of philosophy
and human rights.*

- Supporting the development of International Philosophy Olympiads: The Olympiads, initiated by the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, presently gather students of high-school level from over 20 countries for an essay competition in philosophy. Efforts will be made to support this initiative in other countries (in partnership with the relevant NGOs);
- Strengthening the network of UNESCO Chairs in Philosophy: In addition to giving coherence to existing Chairs, efforts will be made to establish Chairs in Africa and South-East Asia, as well as other regions in the world (in partnership with existing Chairs and the UNESCO Education Sector);
- Disseminating materials produced by the research activities in Pillar I through CD-ROMs and through the UNESCO website: These materials can be used as reference texts in order to foster a comprehensive approach to the teaching of philosophy with respect to the various philosophical trends in the different regions of the world (in partnership with NGOs, universities and institutions).

STUDY ON THE STATE OF THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE WORLD

Following the adoption of the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy during the 171st Session of the UNESCO Executive Board, the implementation of Pillar II of the Strategy was started by the elaboration of a study on the state of philosophy teaching worldwide.

The objective of the study is to provide the most exhaustive collection of information on the present state of philosophy teaching throughout the world.

On the one hand, the study's quantitative aspect will be ensured through a consultation by a questionnaire and the gathering of updated statistical data. On the other hand, the qualitative side of the study will be ensured through an analytical and scientific use of the data collected.

Upon request of the Member States, the results of the study will be published by UNESCO. The publication will be communicated to all countries and their National Commissions for UNESCO and will thus provide a global vision of the positive aspects and of the failures existing in this field. Consequently, it will serve as a basis for elaborating a consolidated plan of action for the better promotion of philosophy and its teaching.

PILLAR III

PROMOTION OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT AND RESEARCH



*Proceedings of the World
Philosophy Day,
21 November 2002
Series of 11 booklets (2004)*



*Proceedings of the World
Philosophy Day,
20 November 2003
Series of 7 booklets (2005)*



*Proceedings of the World
Philosophy Day,
18 November 2004
Series of 10 booklets (2006)*

Popularization of philosophy is essential in developing a democratic and peaceful culture. Linking the knowledge generated in philosophy and fostering independent thought in the minds of the general public is crucial to peace, especially in countries where philosophy is not yet formally taught. Special emphasis will be put on the translation of philosophical works.

The proposed activities include:

- Organizing the celebration of UNESCO Philosophy Day: This is essentially a forum for reflection which aims at promoting and popularizing philosophy. Launched in 2002, events to celebrate philosophy are organized at Paris Headquarters and in Member States in cooperation with various partners. Special emphasis will be made to work, through the National Commissions for UNESCO, with various cities on their initiatives for the popularization of philosophy (in partnership with NGOs, universities, institutes);
- Developing a series of interviews with philosophers from all regions of the world: Philosophers Today: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers. The interviews which will be recorded and filmed will be published in a booklet with a CD-ROM attached for wide dissemination. This can also be used as a teaching material. The aim is to establish an evolving Encyclopaedia of Philosophers, following the model of the RAI Television and their programme of interviews with philosophers and their multimedia Philosophical Encyclopaedia (in partnership with television networks such as RAI, NGOs, universities and institutes);
- Developing programmes for television and/or radio on philosophy which would complement the work already done through Internet sites on philosophy (in partnership with NGOs, universities and institutes);
- Encouraging and promoting the translation of philosophical works (in partnership with research institutes and universities).

Proclamation of a World Philosophy Day
Resolution adopted by the General Conference on its 33rd session,
19 October 2005

The General Conference,

- *Having examined* document 33 C/45 relating to the proclamation of a world philosophy day and the decision of the Executive Board concerning that proclamation,
- *Endorsing* the results of the feasibility study presented by the Director-General on the celebration of a world philosophy day (171 EX/INF.12),
 - *Recalling* that philosophy is a discipline that encourages critical and independent thought, and is capable of working towards a better understanding of the world and promoting tolerance and peace,
 - *Noting* that the proclamation of a world philosophy day will not have any additional financial implications for the regular budget of UNESCO for 2006-2007,
- *Convinced* that the institutionalization of Philosophy Day at UNESCO as a world philosophy day would win recognition for and give strong impetus to philosophy and, in particular, to the teaching of philosophy in the world,

- 1 - *Proclaims* the third Thursday of November every year “World Philosophy Day”;
- 2 - *Invites* the Member States of UNESCO to participate actively in the celebration of this Day and in the determination of the theme, at the local, national and regional levels, with the active participation of National Commissions for UNESCO, non-governmental organizations and the public and private institutions concerned (schools, universities, institutes, municipalities, cities, communities, philosophical associations, cultural associations and so on);
- 3 - *Invites* the Director-General to encourage and support all initiatives which will be taken in this regard at the national, regional and international levels;
- 4 - *Requests* the General Assembly of the United Nations to associate itself with this celebration and encourage the Member States of the United Nations to do likewise.



*Opening ceremony
of the World
Philosophy Day in
Santiago, (Chile),
which took place on
24 November 2005
in the presence of
Mr Ricardo Lagos
Escobar, President of
the Chilean Republic.*



SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES SECTOR



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