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What is UNESCO?

Founded in 1945, UNESCO is a specialized agency of the UN. UNESCO works to create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values. As of 2010 UNESCO has 193 Member States and 7 Associate Members. UNESCO has its headquarters in Paris and more than 50 field offices around the world. UNESCO is the only organization in the UN system that has National Commissions as its contact body and as of the year 2010 there are 196 UNESCO National Commissions around the world.

The main task of National Commissions is to involve as many organizations as possible within UNESCO's fields of competence. The National Commissions reflect the understanding of UNESCO that unless civil society is intimately involved in UNESCO's decision making and programmes, the organization will struggle to fulfill its objectives. In most cases National Commissions are governmental, with their secretariats functioning as an internal part of ministries or other government bodies.

Mission

To contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

UNESCO in JORDAN

Jordan joined UNESCO on 14 June 1950 and the National Commission for UNESCO was established in 1952 and is affiliated to the Ministry of Education. In 1986 Amman became the regional office for Education, Science and Communications. In 1996 UNESCO Amman was designated as a Cluster Office for Culture and Communications until 2000 when it became a National Field Office.

UNESCO's Mission in Jordan

To work with the government of Jordan to provide effective high quality educational, scientific, cultural and communications programmes.

UNESCO Amman Strategic Partnerships

UNESCO Amman Office is a multi-purpose office that works to support the Government, community-based organizations, NGOs and independent professional institutions, in building capacity for science, education, culture and communications.

Through the promotion of collaborative national, sub-regional and regional programmes and activities UNESCO acts as a catalytic agent which stimulates and inspires change and development through collaborative actions among and between national and international development partners, supported by wide ranging institutional networks.

UNESCO is part of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) which operates under the guiding framework of the United Nations Develop-

ment Assistance Framework (UNDAF). UNDAF is a programme document between the Government and the UNCT that describes the collective actions and strategies of the UN for the achievement of national development and the Millennium Development Goals MDG. UNCT Jordan consists of 12 resident agencies namely UNESCO, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNRWA, UNHABITAT, UNOPS, FAO, WFP and WHO. In addition, the UNCT in Jordan works closely with a number of non-resident UN agencies including UNIDO, UNODC, ILO, ESCWA and IFAD. The UNCT ensures that the implementation of the UNDAF is in line with the workplan, that it remains relevant, and that it is responsive to national priorities and targets.

Moreover, the UNESCO Amman Office works side by side with the Government to target the priority areas outlined in the National Agenda. The Ministry of Education is UNESCO Amman's line Ministry which is jointly implementing the UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS). UNESCO also works with the support of the Ministries of Culture, Tourism & Antiquities, Environment, Water and Irrigation, State Minister for Media Affairs and Communication and the Ministry of Information & Communications Technology. Moreover, UNESCO works closely with NGOs, CBOs and other institutions of Jordan's vibrant civil society.

UNESCO also partners with a number of Jordanian academic institutions as a way to advance research, training and programme development in higher education, thereby building university networks and encouraging inter-university cooperation.

UNESCO Amman Thematic Areas

Education: UNESCO is the only UN agency with a mandate for higher education. The rapid growth of Jordan's population has highlighted the need for better quality teaching and education. Through Teacher Training programmes, the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), support to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the Higher Education Programme, important contributions are made to the Jordanian education sector.

Science: Following the Government's priorities, UNESCO's work focuses on capacity building in the fields of integrated water resources management and the application of effective management of scarce water resources. Meanwhile, through an Eco-Hydrology Programme, support is given to the Man and the Biosphere National Programme (MAB) and science, knowledge and policy are mobilized for sustainable development.

Culture: Jordan has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, UNESCO assists the government in protecting its World Heritage sites and Intangible Heritage nomination and increases awareness about Jordan's cultural assets and improved management of the country's cultural resources.

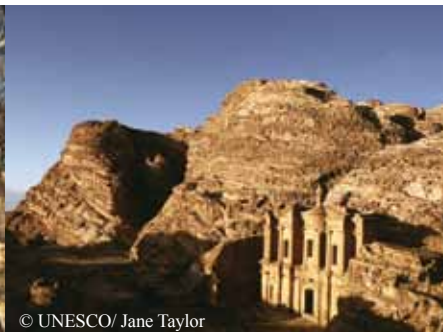
Communication & Information: Communication and information technologies have witnessed a rapid growth and development in Jordan. However, there is still a need to support the development of a free media environment. In this context the focus lies on capacity building of media professionals and training institutions and foster the free flow of information.



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JORDAN at a glance*

Jordan is known as a crossroads of cultures and religions and is strategically located in the heart of the Middle East, bordering Iraq, Israel and the West Bank, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. The vast eastern and southern semi-deserts make up approximately 75% of Jordan's land, broken only by the mountains in the highlands of the north, and the Dead Sea and the Jordan rift valley in the west.

Population

Jordan currently has a population of around 6 million people, nearly 2 million of which make their home in the capital Amman. However, Jordan's central location in the Middle East often results in dramatic fluctuations in the population as people from neighboring countries seek sanctuary within the safety of its borders.

Jordan has a very young and rapidly growing population: 41% are below the age of 15 and the population growth rate is 2.3%. This means that the Jordanian population is expected to double within the next thirty years. The rapid population growth is putting enormous strain on Jordan's limited resources, has widened the poverty gap, and is putting pressure on the economy's ability to generate quality jobs.

Nevertheless, the poverty incidence in Jordan was reduced from 21.3% in 1997 to 14.2 % in 2005 and there are clear indications that, by 2015, the country will indeed eradicate extreme poverty and hunger at the national level. However, major findings of the UN Common Country Assessment (CCA) include wide regional and gender disparities and the potential risk for large segments of near-poor to fall below the poverty line. The most vulnerable groups are large households, women and youth in rural areas.

Education & Literacy

Jordan has a highly literate population with significant growth recorded in adult and youth literacy rates. However the rapid population growth has put a strain on Jordan's educational and teaching resources. The expansion of secondary education and delivery of quality education is a major concern. Nevertheless, despite the enormous challenges, Jordan has been successful in ensuring near universal primary education, and has one of the highest literacy rates in the region. Currently, Jordan ranks 67th out of 128 countries in the Education for All Development Index. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report, Jordan has reduced its adult illiteracy rate from 45% in 1970 to 9% in 2004. This significant drop in adult illiteracy confirms the commitment of the government to eradicate adult illiteracy by 2015.

In the field of early childhood care and education, more than 67% of pre-school aged children are out of school due to the insufficient current capacity to absorb them. The gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education reached 38% in 2007, one of the highest in the region, and the gender balance is in favor of women with women accounting for 51% of total enrolment. However, the weak implementation of accreditation and quality assurance standards in universities has

undermined the quality of higher education, often hindering the access of graduates to the labour market.

Environment

The Human Development Report of 2006 classified Jordan as one of the ten most water scarce countries in the world. Due to the expected population growth, the availability of water resources is expected to fall to less than 90m³ per capita, per year by 2025.

The water challenge in Jordan stands as a major threat confronting human development and poverty alleviation. Notwithstanding the fact that 97% of the population has access to an improved water source, per capita water availability is one of lowest in the world and serious shortfalls remain in the distribution system and the quality of water. Due to its unique geographic location and distinct ecosystems, including the Dead Sea and Jordan River basins, the Gulf of Aqaba, the Badia (desert), the highlands, and freshwater (wetlands) systems, Jordan has a very varied biodiversity. However, Jordan's natural biodiversity is threatened by a number of factors: water shortage; unsustainable agricultural practices such as extensive farming and agricultural waste; urbanization; desertification; and industrial pollution.

Resources

Jordan is a small country with limited natural resources; Jordan's natural resources are potash, phosphate and some reserves of shale oil. However tourism is identified as the country's largest export sector. It is also the second largest private sector employer and second highest producer of foreign exchange, contributing US\$800 million to Jordan's economy and accounting for approximately 10% of the overall GDP.

* Human Development Report 2009, UNDP; Human Development Report 2006, UNDP; United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Jordan 2008-2012, UNCT-Jordan; UN Common Country Assessment (CCA) Jordan 2006, UNCT Jordan; EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010, UNESCO; UNESCO Institute of Statistics data 2007; Jordan National Tourism Strategy 2004-2010, USAID.



Providing Quality Education

UNESCO strives to promote education in Jordan as a fundamental right while aiming to provide access to quality education for all. In Jordan the focus lies on assuring the quality of primary, secondary and higher education in Jordan by integrating literacy, technical vocational education and training, ASPnet, HIV/AIDS, inclusive education and human rights themes into the national curriculum.

UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet)

Coordination and implementation is at regional level for this global UNESCO programme which develops innovative educational approaches, methods and materials for teachers and students. Jordan has over 100 associated schools in the country. The main themes of UNESCO programmes implemented in ASPnet schools in Jordan are human rights, world heritage education, desertification, water and environmental issues, HIV/AIDS and inclusiveness.

Literacy and Non-Formal Education (NFE)

After the success of UNESCO's Adult Literacy project in Um Rassas in 2008-2009, an additional governorate was included by this program on the request of the Ministry of Education. Core actions constitute NFE policy development, literacy materials and capacity building.

Education for All (EFA)

The main actions under EFA at country level constitute raising awareness of the six EFA Dakar Goals and the global commitment to attaining the six goals by 2015. UNESCO's main role is to monitor the progress made by the country towards the attainment of the EFA goals and support the EFA National Committee. UNESCO Amman generates awareness and advocacy with policy-makers and stakeholders towards the attainment of the six EFA Dakar Goals, in the education sector and Jordan's Education Reform Programme.

Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP)

Jordan has been selected, together with Morocco and Palestine, by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics as one of the pilot LAMP countries to develop and test literacy survey instruments. LAMP provides valid, reliable, comparable and interpretable literacy data through carefully conceived and tested instruments. The major tasks and actions of the LAMP project are the establishment of Technical and Supervisory Committees, capacity building workshops on LAMP survey instruments and piloting of the survey instruments.

Teacher Training

In accordance with the UNESCO Education Strategy Study (UNESS) a four year teacher training reform programme targeting governorates in the south is being conducted in partnership with the British Council and the Ministry of Education. At policy level work is being carried out to devise a framework to institutionalize pre and in service training programs.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a rapidly expanding sector in Jordan. TVET is an essential component to provide youth with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of today's increasingly competitive and knowledge-based economy. UNESCO's main actions in Jordan are capacity building, technical support and development of Arabic resource manuals to enhance both access to and quality of TVET programmes in Jordan. Jordan benefits from a regional UNESCO project in Entrepreneurship Education (EPE). Moreover, UNESCO has established three UNESCO-UNEVOC (International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training) centers in Jordan.

HIV & AIDS Education

Education on HIV/AIDS prevention and capacity building of teachers and education personnel in HIV/AIDS are provided in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, National AIDS Programme, UNAIDS group and national partners. The main interventions are thematic research and awareness raising activities using manuals for secondary school students, teachers, health educators and counselors, targeting the youth.

Higher Education

Building on past support provided to the national institutions responsible for quality assurance and accreditation within the framework of the UNESS, support to the Higher Education Reform Programme and strengthening institutional capacity in quality assurance and accreditation are office strengths. Moreover, partnerships were established with a number of academic institutions in the form of UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs, presently there are five, as a way to advance research, training and programme development in higher education. This is helping to develop university networks and encourage inter-university cooperation.

School Readiness Programme for Vulnerable Youth

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) and Caritas Jordan, UNESCO launched in 2009 a yearlong School Readiness Programme for vulnerable youth, including Iraqi refugees in Jordan between the ages of 6 to 18. This programme's focus is on continuing education and providing a supportive network within the formal school system. Working closely with the Ministry of Education this guarantees the integration of capacity building mechanisms for teachers in selected schools and provides the Ministry of Education senior staff with training on inclusive education planning and minimum standards guidelines.

Inclusive Education

In the field of inclusive education the focus lies on enhancing inclusiveness for students with learning disabilities in the resource rooms of the Ministry of Education. UNESCO supports youth and local institutions mandated in the field of social cohesion and inclusiveness to empower women with disabilities in society and in the public school system. In addition, awareness raising activities through media area on-going.



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Working to Protect Jordan's Cultural Heritage and Diversity

UNESCO supports Jordan in protecting sites inscribed on the list of World Heritage and assists in improving the management of museums and cultural objects in Jordan and supporting the safeguarding of Jordan's intangible heritage.

Intercultural dialogue ensures the freedom of expression for all the world's cultures. Dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect is the essential prerequisite for social cohesion and peace among nations. Jordan is at a crossroads of civilizations and is home to many different communities. Cultural diversity is a driving force of development, not only in respect of economic growth, but also as a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible heritage is manifested through oral traditions, such as story-telling, traditional dance and music; social practices and ritual events; knowledge and practices; and traditional craftsmanship. It encompasses living expressions and traditions that are inherited from our ancestors and will be transmitted to our descendants.

The Cultural Space of the Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum was recently inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The preparation of an action plan for the safeguarding of this intangible heritage, including the documentation of Bedouin scientific knowledge is ongoing. Partnership in the country is fostered to create a comprehensive inventory of the intangible heritage of Jordan which will lead to future inscriptions on the Representative List. Following a successful symposium on Semsimiyeh, focus of activities are on promoting other intangible elements such as poetry, folk dance, and storytelling.

Protecting World Heritage

Cultural and natural sites of universal value and significance to humanity are accorded World Heritage status. The accordance of this status recognizes a need to protect this heritage and transmit it to future generations, as well as symbolizing a collective ownership and responsibility for that heritage. Jordan currently has three sites on the World Heritage List – Petra, Quseir Amra, and Um al-Rasas (Kastrom Mefā'a) – and a further 16 sites on the Tentative List.

Continuous support is provided to Government institutions for the protection of its World Heritage Sites, including assistance in developing the nomination files for sites on the Tentative List. Moreover, research studies are undertaken and recommendations made on the protection of sites. This includes mapping the numerous risks, both natural and man-made, that affect Petra, and how they can be mitigated against, in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the site. UNESCO produced *Introducing Young People to Heritage Site Management and Protection* – a practical guide for teachers in the Arab Region, as well as the *World Heritage in Young Hands Educational*

Kit, and continues to work to ensure integration of heritage education and outreach activities into the schools curricula.

Museums Development

Museums are access points for knowledge about cultures and centers of education. Museums also contribute to mutual understanding and social cohesion as well as economic and human development. UNESCO, through educational programs and educational outreach, is actively involved in the enhancement of the skills of museum professionals. Implementation of graduate-level training for museum managers and specialists, the development of a museum objects and collections policy at national level, and trainings in museum collection databases are also among the activities carried out.

Cultural Diversity

The promotion of cultural diversity has become one of the most pressing contemporary issues and is central to UNESCO's mandate. Jordan's melting pot of cultures is an ideal starting point for communities to enter into dialogue and share and learn from each others' cultural traditions. Sharing of knowledge and understanding is prompted and encouraged also by celebrating Cultural Diversity Day each year, bringing the cultural values bearers together to exchange ideas and celebrate their diversity.

Cultural Industries

Access for artisans to training and resources to develop designs and skills is provided, and to explore new ways to regenerate the local traditional handicrafts is a major goal. The final aim would be to institute the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts programme in partnership with local NGOs and CBOs.



Addressing Water Scarcity and Supporting The Environment

UNESCO's science sector at the country level is centered on capacity building, scientific research, technical assistance, policy advocacy, dissemination of best practices and raising awareness. Water and related ecosystems are the principal thematic priorities.

Water Management

In the field of water management, both the UN Common Country Assessment for Jordan and the Third World Water Development Report (WWDR) highlighted the urgent need for an integrated water management system. Since 2004 in collaboration with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MOWI), Al-Balqa Applied University and Jordan National International Hydrological Programme Committee (IHP) annual training workshops on integrated water resources management are being held. The main objective is to provide participants with the principles, tools and methodologies of integrated water related management resources, monitoring and assessment. In addition, under the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund 2009-11, the capacity of the MOWI are being strengthened, in particular to improve integrated water resources management in arid and semi-arid areas through capacity building and research; through establishing a designated centre for advocacy education and capacity building; and by developing a cooperative framework on criteria for the sustainable management of shared water resources, including trans-boundary resources.

Man and the Biosphere National Programme (MAB)

The Jordan MAB Committee chaired by the Minister of Environment has been revived and now support is given to the committee to conduct regular meetings, develop new strategies and workplans for the short and medium term.

Jordan International Hydrological Programme (IHP)

The IHP is an international intergovernmental scientific programme in water resources launched by UNESCO with the aim of promoting a water sciences programme at country level in collaboration with Ministries, concerned institutions and NGOs. The Jordan National Committee for IHP was established in 1993 and is based at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. The Committee is headed by the Minister of Water and Irrigation. The main activities of this programme are research, capacity building and awareness raising.

Earth Sciences for Sustainable Development

Mobilizing science, knowledge and policy for sustainable development are important elements of the Earth Sciences for Sustainable Development programme. Thematically the focus is on hydrological systems, desertification and arid environments. The following are the strategic programme objectives: leveraging scientific knowledge for the benefit of the environment and the management of nat-

ural resources; fostering policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation and contributing to disaster preparedness and mitigation.

SESAME (Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science and Application in the Middle East)

The International Centre for Synchrotron-Light for Experimental Science Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) is an independent laboratory formally created under the auspices of UNESCO on 30 May 2002 and is located in Allan, Balqa governorate. The SESAME project is a significant model project for the region which demonstrates how a scientific mission can also promote peace. SESAME manages to unite countries for a scientific purpose that sometimes have difficult political relations such as Armenia, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, the Palestinian Authority and Turkey. The main goal of SESAME is to build a bright light source for cutting-edge experiments in materials science and biology. SESAME will focus on structural molecular biology, atomic and molecular sciences, surface and interface science, environmental science, material science and archaeological science.

Science Education

The methodology of microscience education will be introduced into the national education system with the collaboration of the Ministry of Education through the UNESCO "Microscience Experiments Project". The microscience methodology gives primary and secondary school pupils and university students alike an opportunity to conduct practical scientific experiments in physics, chemistry and biology using experimental kits that accompany a textbook.

Jordan Science, Technology and Innovation Policy and Strategy

Supporting the Government and the Higher Council for Science and Technology to develop the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy & Strategy in Jordan, 2011-2015. This aims at building the capacity of Jordanian policy-makers to develop a medium-term, needs-and-results-based Master Plan for Science Technology and Innovation for the period 2011-2015.



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Encouraging Free Media Expression

In the sector of Communication and Information UNESCO Amman priorities are to promote freedom of expression and access to information in Jordan; strengthen free, independent and pluralistic media; develop media communication for sustainable development; and foster universal access to information and knowledge, and the development of infrastructures for information and knowledge.

Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press

Awareness raising programmes for media professionals to address self-censorship in the media, and to improve the standards of media professionals is one of the main activities in the field of communications. To this end support was given to the publication of a training manual: "Story-Based Inquiry: a Manual for Investigative Reporters" and support is given to local NGOs in educating journalists on media-related laws, rules, regulations and best practices. Moreover, in cooperation with local journalists and media organizations every year events and campaigns are organized on the occasion of World Freedom Press Day.

Media and Sustainable Development

The 21st century is witnessing major transformations in IT, media, learning and global markets. With the expansion of market-lead approaches to development, new challenges for the environment and sustainable development are unfolding. This implies the need for a new generation of media professionals that are aware of these challenges and the linkages between local and global action. Journalists should play an active role in shaping public understanding and policies on environmental issues. There is a strong commitment to improve the role played by media professionals in sustainable development and the environment. In order to understand the current role of the media in addressing the public and private sector on environmental issues, a comprehensive survey on the Jordanian media between 1989 and 2009 was carried out.

Whereas the focus is on climate change, water issues, and the reporting of natural disasters, the major goal is to create a new discourse for sustainable development and expand local media attention to embrace environment issues. Through training workshops and practical field visits, such projects build the capacity of young media professionals on effective communication, reporting skills and investigative journalism while raising the awareness and attention of journalists on the most important environmental issues. Joint activities with local media and environmental organizations are carried out in Jordan and support is given to media professionals in participating international symposia and workshops.

Building Capacities of Information Institutions

Active support to media institutions to enhance their capacities and improve the qualities of their services in Jordan is a central element

of UNESCO's activities aimed at fostering universal access to information and knowledge in Jordan.

Another field of activity are cross-cutting themes such as the documentation of cultural-historical data. With the classification of historical data, assistance is given to Jordan in preserving, documenting and archiving important historical audio visual documents and making this cultural heritage and historical information accessible to all Jordanians and future generations. This will also foster the listing of important printed material in the UNESCO "Memory of the World" Register.

Strengthening Communication Capacities and Media Training Institutions

UNESCO supports the development and capacity building of media professionals and media training institutions by supporting a variety of training programs and providing technical support with a thematic focus on sustainable development, human rights and investigative journalism.



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

UNESCO Constitution

UNESCO encourages collaboration, cooperation, and mutual knowledge and understanding.

UNESCO Amman Office relies on input from the UNESCO National Commission, Jordan’s Ministries, specialized institutions in the field of education, media, culture and science, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) to plan and implement work effectively.

If you would like to fund or partner in one of UNESCO’s projects in Jordan, or if you would like to propose a potential activity, or if you would simply like to know more information regarding UNESCO’s work in Jordan, please do not hesitate to contact the Amman Office.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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