



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

UNESCO and NGOs

UNESCO and NGOs

Since its inception, UNESCO has recognized that Non-Governmental Organizations and foundations, which have concerns close to its own, play an important role in international cooperation in the service of peoples. For more than a half-century, UNESCO has woven a valuable tapestry of cooperative relations with a number of such organizations in its fields of competence, thereby enabling it to work with civil society in achieving its objectives and to disseminate through them its democratic and ethical ideals.

UNESCO's cooperation with NGOs

UNESCO's cooperation with NGOs is rich and extremely varied. Without claiming to be exhaustive, there are three main forms of cooperation: 1) cooperation to define programmes and strategies – also known as upstream cooperation: 2) collective cooperation, a form explicitly provided for by the Directives concerning UNESCO's relations with non-governmental organizations in order to promote coordinated action: and 3) local, national and regional cooperation, which is developing exponentially owing to the increasing dynamic nature of civil society and the Organization's decentralization policy. The National Commissions and UNESCO field units are two main partners of UNESCO to work with NGOs at the national and local levels.

Institutional mechanisms for cooperation

- *Section for Non Governmental Organizations*

The Section is part of the Sector for External Relations and Cooperation's Division of Relations with Organizations and New Partnerships. It has responsibility for all aspects of cooperation relations between UNESCO and NGOs and foundations pursuant to decisions

taken by the governing bodies and the relevant Directives. It plays an important role of liaison with the Secretariat at Headquarters and in the field, with Member States, the governing bodies and non-governmental organizations, in order to foster NGO involvement in the programmes, facilitate collective cooperation and monitor joint activities. The Section also ensures the Secretariat of the Committee on NGOs of the Executive Board.

- *Committee on Non Governmental Organizations of the Executive Board*

This Committee is a permanent subsidiary organ of the Executive Board, one of the three constitutional organs of UNESCO, which examines its programme of work and corresponding budget estimates and ensures the effective and rational execution of the programme. The Committee on NGOs, made up of 24 Member States, is in charge of examining matters relating to the establishment of official relations with NGOs and all other questions in relation to cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations. All NGOs in official relations are invited to participate in the round tables and open forums organized on various subjects pertaining to the programme, with the Member States and the Secretariat.

Currently, UNESCO is enjoying official relations with 310 international NGOs and 19 foundations and similar institutions, which are working in the fields of competence of the Organization. Moreover, it should be stressed that UNESCO cooperates, on an informal basis, with many NGOs and foundations working in its fields of competence, before establishing "official relations".

- *NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee*

The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, elected by the International Conference of NGOs in official relations with UNESCO (held once every two years), is the intermediary between UNESCO and the community of NGOs in official relations. It is responsible for permanent coordination and continuity of collective cooperation. Based at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, it is composed of nine NGOs and a Chairperson. The Liaison Committee creates and assumes the functioning of Joint Programmatic Commissions (JPC) and working groups, in cooperation with UNESCO's Programme Sectors.

Tools and framework for cooperation

- *Directives*

UNESCO adopted statutory frameworks of cooperation: *the Directives concerning UNESCO's relations with non-governmental organizations (1995)* and *Directives concerning relations between UNESCO and foundations and similar institutions (1991)*, to create the necessary conditions for a partnership which will ensure that UNESCO, in the preparation and execution of its programmes, benefits from the broadest possible support from NGOs, Foundations and similar institutions, with recognized capacity for

reflection and mobilization on the ground. Both Directives are available on the Internet: <http://www.unesco.org/en/ngo>

- *Sexennial report on the contributions made to UNESCO's activities by non-governmental organizations (2001-2006)*

In accordance with Section V.3 of the Directives concerning UNESCO's relations with non-governmental organizations, the General Conference receives, every six years, a report by the Executive Board on the contributions made to UNESCO's activities by non-governmental organizations. The last report covering the period 2001-2006 (document 34 C/27) contains relevant recommendations addressed to all the actors of the partnership with the aim of fostering and improving the cooperation with NGOs.

- *Directory (Database) of NGOs in official relations with UNESCO*

A list of NGOs maintaining official relations with UNESCO is maintained and updated regularly by the section for Non-Governmental Organizations, which is available on the site: <http://www.unesco.org/en/ngo>

More information :

Section for NGOs
Marie-Ange Théobald, Chief ERC/RPO/NGO
E-mail: rpo-ngo@unesco.org
Website : <http://www.unesco.org/en/ngo>

NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee
Bernard Loing, President
E-mail: comite.liaison.ong@unesco.org
Website : <http://comite.liaison.ong@unesco.org>