



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
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pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

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

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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

UNESCO's New Intersectoral Platforms

As a new modality of programme delivery, UNESCO is implementing 12 Intersectoral platforms which aim to pool expertise from its five programme sectors (education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, communication and information) in order to ensure an intersectoral, interdisciplinary programme response to key global challenges of a complex nature. The four "60 Minutes" sessions of September 2008 focus on this new initiative.

Intersectoral platforms are an innovation in the way UNESCO conceives, manages and implements its programme in an interdisciplinary manner. The Organization's principal strength remains the in-depth expertise of its five Programme Sectors. However, many of today's complex challenges call for an intersectoral response, which can be one of UNESCO's comparative advantages in the multilateral arena. The platforms seek to ensure this is the case by defining a joint strategy and establishing operational teams made up of colleagues working in various Sectors and, most importantly, in various regions and countries of the world – either in field offices or UNESCO institutes.

Goals of the Platform Approach

During the current biennium (2008-2009), UNESCO is implementing 12 intersectoral platforms in areas that require an interdisciplinary approach.

In the longer term, it is expected that this innovative approach to programme implementation and delivery at the country level will help to position the Organization as it navigates through the ever-changing global environment within which it operates, benefitting effectively from UNESCO's own reforms as well as those being undertaken within the broader UN reform agenda. The number and themes of these platforms may need to be adapted in coming years. The Director-General has already indicated in

his preliminary proposals for the next biennium (document 180 EX/21 Part II (A)) that he would envisage a reduction in the number of intersectoral platforms, for the sake of concentration and to avoid thematic overlaps and duplications. A larger allocation of sectoral programme resources is proposed

It is also hoped that the intersectoral platforms will prove to have a strong visibility component, projecting and communicating UNESCO's contribution on important contemporary issues globally, regionally, and nationally.

A New Structure to meet New Challenges

The Platforms are designed to ensure quality, relevance and coherence in the way UNESCO tackles some of the world's complex challenges. They also focus on country-level responses to those

challenges and place them within the context of United Nations reform.

The platforms emphasize activities at the country and regional levels which have a high potential for interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration and engagement.

The platforms are expected to use different modalities of intervention. However, special efforts will be made to ensure that they contribute to building capacity, especially institutional capacities, at country level in an integrated manner and that they promote gender equality, one of the two global priorities of the Organization.



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Intersectoral Platforms 1.

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The following twelve Intersectoral Platforms have been agreed for 2008-2009:

1. Science education
2. HIV and AIDS
3. Education for sustainable development
4. Contribution to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
5. Fostering ICT-enhanced learning
6. Strengthening national research systems
7. Languages and multilingualism
8. Contributing to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and a culture of peace
9. Support to countries in post-conflict and disaster situations
10. Priority Africa: coordinating and monitoring the plan of action to benefit Africa
11. UNESCO action to address climate change
12. Foresight and anticipation

Operational Task Teams

Each intersectoral platform, led by an Assistant Director-General (ADG), has a Platform Manager, who is designated to coordinate all substantive input and the operational requirements. Each Sector or office involved in the specific Platform nominates a colleague to act as its focal point. In this way, an operational task team is formed, whose role and responsibility it is to define the details of the action plan, to foster its substantive, integrated implementation, including joint activities where possible, and to undertake regular review and monitoring of the implementation process. Thus, each specialist involved in a platform remains within the original Sector structure but works in a more comprehensively collaborative way with colleagues in other fields on such issues as HIV, climate change or ICT-enhanced learning (see box on page 2 for full list of platforms) This approach is more relevant for today's world than limited sectoral actions.

Steering Committees

To build bridges between the Organization's Sectors -- and thus reduce its "silo" structure - a Steering Committee serves as an intersectoral strategy and oversight mechanism for each platform. Composed of the Deputy Director-General and ADGs involved in the platform, it meets periodically to assess progress. Its role is also to provide guidance, identifying opportunities for cross-fertilization of approaches and experiences, monitoring and reporting on progress achieved throughout the biennium and to ensure course correction during implementation as needed.

A Learning Process

How do the new platforms differ from previous task forces and similar structures established to address global priorities in an all-encompassing manner? While the establishment of such mechanisms had enabled the Organization to seek strategic leadership on issues which requires interdisciplinary attention, in an essentially top-down manner, a more dedicated bottom-up, programme-centred focus is now applied for the elaboration and implementation of concrete actions.

Many of the platforms build on considerable intersectoral cooperation over past years in certain thematic areas (HIV and AIDS, education for sustainable development, SIDS, strategy on climate change, languages and multilingualism, post-conflict and post-disaster situations). For some, the adjustment to the status of an intersectoral platform will be minor; for others, it is hoped that it will further stimulate effective transversal action and lead over time to more integrated working arrangements including, possibly, pooled budget and staff.

As a learning Organization, UNESCO will be exploring the implications of the platforms as a new vehicle for programme delivery in the four sessions of "60 Minutes" internal communication meetings scheduled in September 2008. These informal gatherings will provide an opportunity for discussion on the first stages of implementation of the platforms with their managers as well as for the exchange of ideas and experience.

To find out more

Link: www.unesco.org/en/platforms

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