2013 - 2022

INTERNATIONAL DECADE
for the RAPPROCHEMENT OF CULTURES
DÉCENNIE INTERNATIONALE
du RAPPROCHEMENT DES CULTURES

Title: Supporting Member States in the implementation of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)

Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	Global-Regional-National
Duration (in months):	2014-2016 (36 months)
Name and Unit of project Officer	SHS/TSD/PPC
Partner(s) institutions:	UNESCO member States, UN Alliance of Civilizations, ISESCO, ASEAN, ASEM, ALECSO, African Union, European Union, KAICIID, UNESCO Institutes and Centres for Category I and II, UNESCO Chairs and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors, UNESCO ASPnet, Clubs, etc.
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	2,500 000 USD

Rationale and background

What

In a world of intricate interdependencies, where a conflict somewhere can spread conflict anywhere, lasting peace rests on a complex and fragile fabric of interrelated values, attitudes and behaviours required both in the implementation of international treatises and in the course of daily life with the practice of tolerance, openness, mutual understanding and dialogue. Dialogue, in particular, is bound to play an increased role in the promotion of peace, as the planet is more and more interconnected but still lacks the "intellectual and moral solidarity'" of humankind called upon by the Constitution of UNESCO.

Yet, the persistent question remains as to the best approach to unity-in-diversity, or, even more, to the achievement of unity beyond diversity through the full participation in the infinite wealth of the cultures of the world faced with global social transformations that are likely to exacerbate misunderstanding and conflicts. This calls for urgent remedy actions.

Why

Globalization is opening up spaces for dialogue, even as it revives misunderstandings, the retrenchment of identities and rejections of the Other. This phenomenon is further strengthened by the rise of new technologies that enables the rapid, wide-scale dissemination of messages of hatred and of solidarity.

Shared dynamics – cultural diversity, growing inequalities, the marginalization or exclusion of minority groups in economic, ethnic, cultural or linguistic terms – all underscore the need for initiatives on a global and national scale for intercultural dialogue as a factor in mediation, reconciliation and solidarity – between ethnic and cultural groups, with minorities, in cities which are experiencing an influx of workers from rural areas, and in regions which host immigrant or refugee populations. These issues are particularly sensitive in countries in conflict or in transition, all the more so that three-quarters of the major conflicts in the world today are acknowledged to have a cultural dimension or are motivated by culture, even though culture, as well as religion, is never in themselves causes of conflict.

Member States need support to engaging relevant actions that illustrate the benefits of jointly promoting respect for human rights and cultural diversity, while acknowledging the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and to fight against new forms of exclusion.

Why UNESCO ?

UNESCO is the only specialized UN agency entrusted with the mandate to build the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women. In this unique capacity, it can undertake and stimulate a broad-based dialogue on sensitive issues, respond to a range of global challenges as to protecting and promoting cultural diversity and contributing to reconciliation and peace, through capacity building, the development of appropriate policies, tools and operational and inclusive modalities, while involving a wide range of partners. This is demonstrated by a lead role and achievements in the International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and most recently in the International Year (2010) and the resulting Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022). These key commitments are set high in the Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2021) and the Approved Programme and Budged (2014-2017).

This CAP therefore intends to support UNESCO's work to implement SPO6, MPIII and MLA 1. More precisely, it will enhance the effectiveness and impact of the expected results 2 and 3, using also the foresight approach in line with ER 1. Global priorities and operational strategies for Africa (Flagship Programme 1) and Gender Equality will also be positively impacted, as well as the focus on youth.

Overall Goal/Objective

The overarching goal is to support Member States to empowering the present and future generations with the appropriate knowledge, competences, skills and tools necessary to exchange, communicate and cooperate across cultural, religious and national boundaries, and to become responsible global citizens in a safer world for all.

Main expected results

1. The Action Plan of the IDRC is disseminated and used as a mobilizing and unifying framework for strategic initiatives and policy action at global, regional and national levels, and UNESCO's lead role reaffirmed;
2. A framework for commonly shared values that foster social cohesion is developed and contribute to better mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity;
3. New dialogue-based principles, policies, tools and operational modalities are elaborated to support the emergence of more peaceful and inclusive societies.

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

This CAP is developed in view of a range of projects accommodating activities and deliverables that will support Member States and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Action Plan for the IDRC.

I- Background Work

Making major activities occurring over a decade of this nature do not just happen, but require significant advance planning of several sorts, with activities necessary for any Member State participating in the Decade and UNESCO lead role. They include:

➢ **Evaluation of the current status**

An initial assessment by each Member State of current policies to monitor inclusiveness and respect for diversity within its own borders is encouraged. Such assessment may entail examining laws, national policies, curriculum and textbooks, or traditional and new media, and should be informed by relevant UNESCO conventions, declarations and recommendations in the fields of education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information.

o Sensitization and awareness raising initiatives for Member States for taking status assessments at national level
o Status report(s) with relevant information for gap analysis, recording and knowledge management of pertinent policies, practices and modalities to inform new adapted policy action at national, regional and global level;
o Design and setting of annual priorities and strategies at national, regional and global levels and follow-up action;
o Develop a set of qualitative and quantitative guidelines and indicators to monitor inclusiveness in the context of the rapprochement of cultures.

➢ **Mobilizing key partnerships to support the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue conducive to mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence**

o Pledging letters, events and conferences, fundraising, MoUs, etc;
o Joint initiatives in the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and follow-up action.

➢ **Development of a communication strategy and promotional tools**

UNESCO need to develop a consolidated communication strategy for the Decade, so as to ensure a clear focus on its goals and objectives, while designing a well-established communication plan to aid implementation at national, regional and global levels.

o Sensitization tools based on the Action Plan of the IDRC, for dissemination to all relevant stakeholders around the world (brochure, leaflet, mark page, almanac, calendar, etc.)
o branding process using the Logo for "flagship initiatives for the rapprochement of cultures" (record of good practices)
o Global, regional and national campaigns for the rapprochement of cultures (messages, video spots, contests, online discussion forums and other special initiatives promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue).
o website, newsletter, flyers, posters, social media to disseminate key messages for sensitization and awareness-raising, including publicity gadgets.

II- Flagship activities in support of the IDRC

To support a profound movement towards the goals of this International Decade, the main areas of action identified in the Action Plan will serve as reference points for specific activities to be engaged, as outlined below:

➢ **Promoting mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity as well as supporting reconciliation efforts**

The rapprochement of cultures through intercultural and interreligious dialogue requires basic understanding about members of other groups, including their history, language, and religion. Thus the promotion of knowledge content and practices will be central to the Decade's activities. This

includes traditional bodies of knowledge as well as local and indigenous knowledge systems, which contribute to sustainable development, the promotion of human rights, philosophy and intercultural dialogue, with particular emphasis on fighting racism, discrimination, extremism, and radicalization, as well as the manipulation of cultural and religious identities to achieving a culture of peace and democracy.

o Knowledge promotion on different cultures, building on existing resources (world heritage list, intangible heritage, histories and routes programmes, etc.)

o Organization of activities with research, meetings and public debates, and the broadening of spaces for intercultural mediation in the form of exhibitions illustrating exchanges and transfers between cultures, as well as fairs and festivals, using spaces such as museums, art galleries and foundations, and making use of new technologies that specifically foster linguistic diversity and translation.

o Create new forum for discussion on interreligious and intercultural dialogue to identify emerging issues in these domain and advancing research and policy action

o Promote the importance of public places and special events such as cultural festivals, religious gatherings and sports events, taking advantage of United Nations Days, Weeks, Years and Decades as they offer privileged venues for cultural interaction.

o Establish creative and artistic projects in collaboration with UNESCO Artists for Peace and involving various communities to promote the rapprochement of cultures.

➢ **Building a framework for commonly shared values that foster social cohesion**

At the heart of every culture is a set of values, attitudes, and assumptions about appropriate behaviors that members take for granted, but non-members often do not know, let alone understand. Therefore it is essential to help Member States to provide opportunities for citizens to not only learn about the values, attitudes, behaviors of those living in specific other cultures, but also to support conversations relating to values, attitudes, and behaviors shared across groups as a way of fostering social cohesion.

o set of common vocabulary for discussing values

o tools for holding conversations across different cultural groups

o tools that promote knowledge on relevant elements of cultural and religious traditions or beliefs from across the world to enhance better mutual understanding and respect for diversity

o platforms of exchange and to multiply innovative practices conducive to cultural pluralism at local, national and regional levels, involving UNESCO Chairs, ASPnet Schools, UNESCO Clubs, etc.

o an online global policy hub that will map, aggregate and disseminate policy documents, regulatory frameworks, good practices and lessons learned to promote social cohesion and intercultural dialogue

o an online capacity-building training package on social inclusion that builds on existing UNESCO training materials

➢ **Disseminating the principles and tools of intercultural dialogue through quality education and the media**

This will be achieved through:

o improved access to formal and non-formal quality education for all, free from cultural, religious and gender prejudices and stereotypes as well as human rights and intercultural dialogue education to strengthen South-South and North-South-South interuniversity cooperation;

o development of manuals, courses and training on media information literacy and intercultural dialogue, community radio programmes, namely in local languages

o training workshops, tools and modules for capacity building workshops to promote intercultural competences, building on UNESCO's *Intercultural Competences: A Conceptual and Operational Framework,* published in 2013 (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002197/219768e.pdf) and its specific operational plan.

> ➤ **Fostering dialogue for sustainable development and its ethical, social and cultural dimensions**

As poverty and environmental degradations are recognized causes of conflict and obstacles to reconciliation among and within nations, the rapprochement of cultures builds on the same requirements as sustainable development, notably with respect to the oft-neglected ethical, social and cultural dimensions of the latter. This intangible dimension of development is nonetheless essential to address if modes of consumption and production are to be transformed democratically and progressively so that humankind can achieve shared well-being, notably within the post-2015 agenda.

o Inform policies and practices of sustainable development building on the rich body of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems as a resource of values, attitudes and behaviors.

o Records of forms of knowledge and traditions that contribute to safeguarding the resilience of ecosystems and to promoting sustainable uses in the management of water and other natural resources.

o Create new spaces of dialogue in the sciences, notably with respect to the dimensions of scientific progress, which may raise ethical issues and controversies.

o Etc.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

Direct beneficiary to this work are Member States. However, there will be an effort towards creating relevant and goal-oriented partnerships to build inclusive planning and implementation frameworks, so to ensure the effective involvement and cooperation among key actors for a better appropriation of the results.

Implementation Strategy

This CAP will take stock of UNESCO's long-standing work in this domain and its main functions as laboratory of ideas, clearing house, standard-setter, capacity-builder and catalyst for international cooperation. It will also capitalize on UNESCO's work on intercultural dialogue, culture of peace and the rapprochement of cultures. The opportunity to set up an intersectoral steering committee with focal points from different sectors will be envisaged, so to ensure a smooth coordination of the implementation and follow-up.

Sustainability and exit strategy

As lead United Nations agency for the implementation of this Decade, UNESCO will liaise with all relevant stakeholders involved to ensure the smooth coordination and sharing of information. This will also support the reporting framework to governing bodies of UNESCO and the United Nations. It will also be useful to monitor and ensure backstopping for knowledge management of the key achievements in the implementation this Decade and its Action Plan.

Evaluation will occur at the end of each project and at the end of the Decade, both within Member States, as well as regionally and globally, to ensure that something noteworthy has resulted from all the time, effort and funding spent on this Decade. In this regard, qualitative and quantitative indicators on the impact of actions which express the commitment by Member States and the civil society to nurture the rapprochement of cultures will be developed. This will definitely help to encouraging appropriation by beneficiaries and further scaling up of results obtained at different implementation levels.