

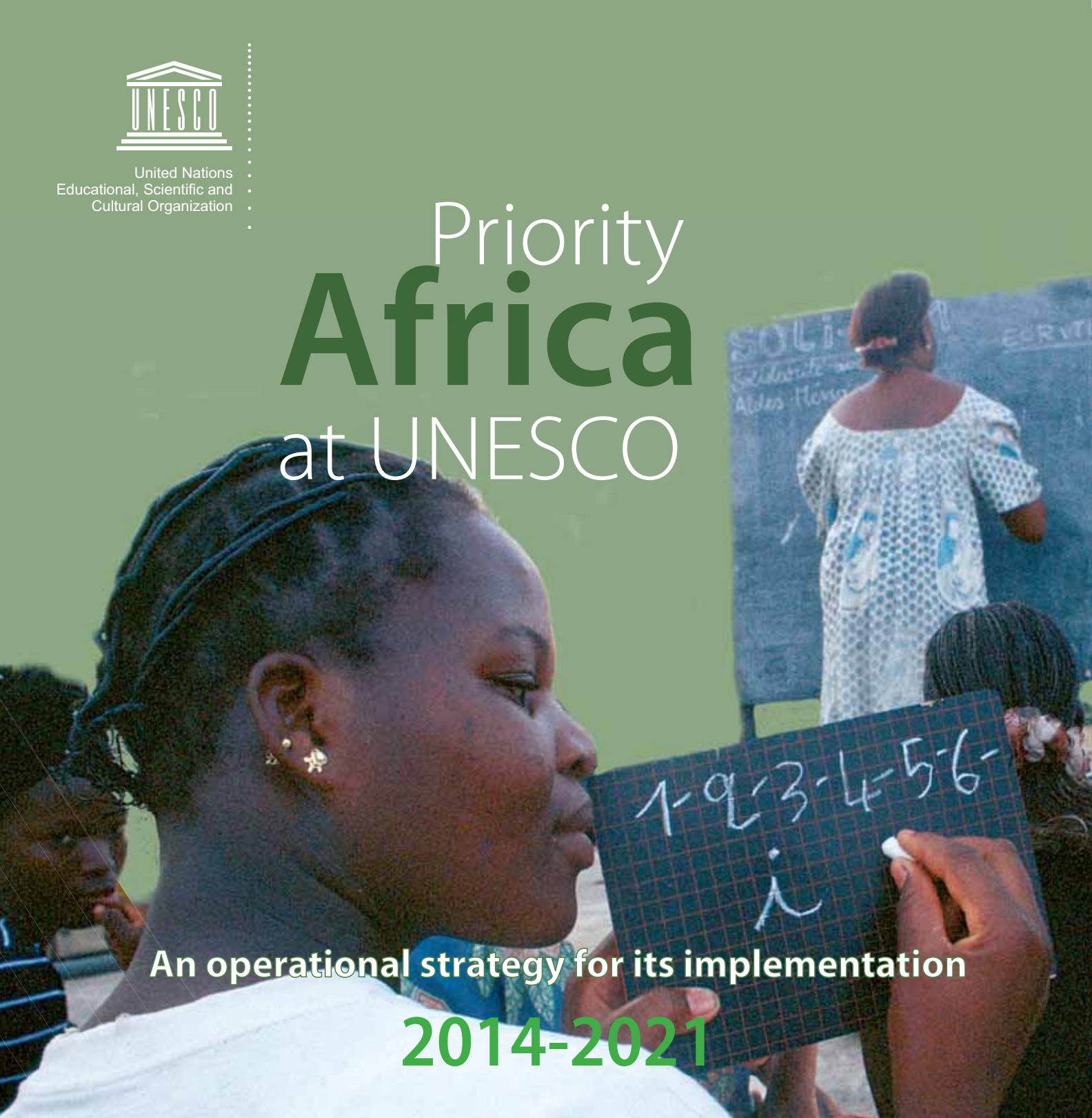


United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Priority **Africa** at UNESCO

An operational strategy for its implementation

2014-2021



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La Priorité
Afrique
à l'UNESCO

Priority
Africa
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An operational strategy for its implementation

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AN OPERATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION 2014-2021

Vision of the African Union

“An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.”

In order to fulfill this vision, as expressed by the African Union, and to release the full potential for the development of the continent, the African countries will have to innovatively address four major challenges while taking advantage of the opportunities they represent – demographic growth, social transformation, democratic governance and sustainable development and economic growth.



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

Demographic Growth

Africa's population has risen considerably in the last 25 years. It is currently estimated at 1.1 billion inhabitants and, according to United Nations forecasts, it will rise to 2.4 billion, or nearly one-third of the world's population, by 2050. Such rapid growth has two immediate consequences, to which all African governments and development partners are attentive:

- ✓ an exploding youth population: more than 60% of the African population is under 35, which raises the challenge of matching education/training to employment;
- ✓ an ever higher population density in much of the continent, which raises the challenges of coexistence and of the rational and peaceful management of natural resources and the environment.

How can the youth population be educated and trained in order to be integrated into society through decent and stable employment?

What types of education and what content are required to train young people so that they can participate fully in their country's development?

How can social cohesion be ensured within population groups increasingly faced with all forms of diversity?

How can the use and sharing of some African regions' abundant yet rare natural resources be managed peacefully?

Action of UNESCO

UNESCO will work to implement and realize educational, cultural, and scientific policies which contribute to the building of inclusive societies founded on compliance to fundamental human rights. Accordingly, support for the implementation of the African Union's Second Decade of Education for Africa and the promotion of a culture of science, of technological skills for young people, in particular, and of appropriate youth policies generally are to be considered in several respects as major lines of action that have a potentially significant impact on youth capacity building and employability. The same holds true for schemes that contribute to knowledge production in and on Africa and the promotion of innovation based on endogenous knowledge and technologies.

Sustainable development and economic growth

Despite the progress made in terms of economic growth, Africa continues to present the paradox of widespread poverty in a continent that abounds in human and natural resources. There are several economic, political, social, cultural, environmental and technological factors that could explain this paradox. It is clear, however, that most African economies remain dependent on one or a limited number of products with low added value and are heavily dependent on foreign aid for the funding of their development; there is little intra-African trade in spite of the willingness to promote regional integration of economies and markets.

Economic growth, intellectual influence, and technical or socio-organizational innovations go hand in hand and are mutually reinforcing.

The intangible – represented by software, socio-organizational processes and, generally speaking, science and technology – plays an important role in relation to raw materials: knowledge has become the most important raw material and knowledge access and knowledge sharing are key issues. Science and technology play a crucial role.

The multi-dimensional challenges relating to climate change must also be taken into consideration, as must biodiversity and environmental issues in the context of green and blue economies.

Cultural industries that also contribute increasingly to the development of African economies deserve to be promoted and ranked among the most dynamic economic sectors.

To that end, it is essential to make them visible and, using factual data, affirm their contribution to economic growth.



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Action of UNESCO

UNESCO will support the African States, the African Union, and regional communities in the implementation of policies and programmes promoting regional and continental integration. This will include programmes that strengthen cross-border inter-community cohesion through education and culture and promote the peaceful management of cross-border resources, knowledge sharing and intellectual cooperation between States.

Increasing Africa's share in world scientific production is a major challenge that must be met if the continent is to be an active participant in the global market. Today, it is imperative for African countries to promote the production and recognition by Africans of knowledge and know-how as well as the appreciation of knowledge and endogenous knowledge systems linking culture and development. UNESCO can make a significant contribution to improving the collection and analysis of related statistical data.

Social Transformations

In Africa, ancestral social relations based on the traditional values of family solidarity, clan unity and social cohesion have been and continue to be sorely tested by modern economies. Economic inequality and the exclusion of social groups in all sectors of the population are among the many factors of instability that exacerbate the loss of meaning of the African traditions of solidarity and sharing.

They are not the only causes but they are the most visible ones and they generate the most rapid transformations – rampant urbanization, rural exodus, insecure employment, street children, insecurity and mass youth emigration. The prevalence of certain practices rooted in ancestral traditions does not encourage the promotion of freedoms and rights, in particular those of women and girls.

How can an approach that focuses on social ties be reconciled with one that concentrates on the economic good?

How can extant “traditional” education based on established relations be linked to the requirements of a “modern” and resolutely outward-looking education?

How can these tensions be prevented from becoming permanent conflicts and threats to stability and development?

In Africa, too, many conflicts and wars have broken out within and between States in the last three decades, with consequences such as the mass displacement of entire populations, the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, and the destruction of social and cultural infrastructure.

In particular, education systems, the cultural heritage, scientific and cultural infrastructure and biodiversity have been affected indirectly by these conflicts and have been damaged irreparably in many cases.

These conflicts might also lead to other evils such as organized crime, piracy, drug trafficking, environmental depredation and a booming war economy, all of which further weaken many States that are still unstable and vulnerable in terms of security and stability.

Action of UNESCO

The challenge of a culture of peace and collective security continues to be topical issues for UNESCO. UNESCO is involved, through several sectoral and intersectoral programmes, in resolving the above-mentioned problematic issues and it will continue, through innovative action, to work closely with regional African bodies to that end. Ongoing programmes designed to promote a culture of peace and to support education, in particular education for peace and education for sustainable development (ESD), culture as a pillar of sustainable development and the teaching of the General History of Africa are all examples of activities which will be pursued. These are some of the levers UNESCO could activate for ensuring that ongoing social transformations are forces of peace, development and continuity.

Democratic governance

One of the keys to Africa's harmonious and sustainable development is the capacity of States to establish systems of governance based on the rule of law and respect for freedoms.

How can democratic commons be lastingly guaranteed when social inequalities persist in several countries?

How can greater civic participation be ensured for young people and women living in extreme poverty?

The progress achieved by many African countries in terms of governance since the 1990s is noteworthy and comprises democratic elections, greater freedom of expression, higher levels of civic participation, civil society involvement on a larger scale and greater representation of women in decision-making bodies. Such progress has been achieved owing to action taken to promote education, raise awareness of democracy, peace and human rights, train community media and stakeholders and sensitize young people. These activities are all covered by UNESCO's terms of reference.

Action of UNESCO

UNESCO has always been present in the field to guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms through educational, training and awareness-raising activities. It will continue its endeavor to promote freedom of expression, free access to information, respect for women's rights, inclusive access to education for all, democracy and peace.



PRIORITY AFRICA IN THE MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY

Over the medium term period 2014-2021 (37 C/4) and based on consultations with and decisions of Member States, UNESCO's actions will focus on two major areas:

- ✓ Building peace by building inclusive, peaceful and resilient societies;
- ✓ Building institutional capacities for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Member States expect UNESCO to implement a stronger and better targeted strategy to build peace, eradicate poverty, and achieve inclusive sustainable development by improving the quality, equity and relevance of education, by harnessing science, technology and innovation to boost development and build related capacities, by mobilizing the heritage and creative industries for culture and development, by promoting freedom of expression, and by using ICTs for development, gender equality and peace and citizenship education.



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Action of UNESCO

The operational strategy for Priority Africa is designed to consolidate the results of action taken by UNESCO in order to achieve Africa's priorities and the Organization's main medium-term goals set for 2014-2021. It will generally guide all UNESCO actions in favour of Priority Africa, in particular action under a small number of "flagship programmes" that will raise the profile of Priority Africa as recommended by the Member States. These flagship programmes were defined upon wide intersectoral work.

Youth and Gender are their two crosscutting priorities.

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

1. Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence;
2. Strengthening education systems for sustainable development in Africa: improving equity, quality and relevance;
3. Harnessing STI and knowledge for the sustainable socio-economic development of Africa;
4. Fostering science for the sustainable management of Africa's natural resources and disaster risk reduction;
5. Harnessing the power of culture for sustainable development and peace in a context of regional integration;
6. Promoting an environment conducive to freedom of expression and media development.

Flagship programme 1: Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence

Objectives:

Address the causes and increase the capacity of peaceful resolution of conflicts;

Promote values and traditional endogenous practices of the culture of peace, specifically involving women and young people on a daily basis.

Main actions

- Strengthening peace and non-violence through education, advocacy and media including ICTs and social networks;
- Developing the use of heritage and contemporary creativity as tools for building peace through dialogue;
- Promoting scientific and cultural cooperation for the management of natural transboundary resources;
- Empowering and engaging young people, women and men for democratic consolidation, community development and a culture of peace.

Flagship programme 2 : Strengthening education systems for sustainable development in Africa: improving equity, quality and relevance

Objective:

Improve the quality and relevance of education.

Main actions

- Provide technical assistance and strengthen national capacities to improve teacher policy formulation, implementation and assessment teaching needs, with particular focus on policies relating to attracting and retaining those most qualified for the teaching profession and teachers in rural and disadvantaged locations;
- Develop capacities of national teacher training institutions to deliver quality training using blended strategies including ICT;
- Support the capacity development of head teachers and school principals for effective pedagogical leadership and quality learning outcomes;
- Support qualitative policies for teaching and learning environments;
- Support the development and harmonization of national and regional qualification frameworks for education personnel.



Flagship programme 3 : Harnessing STI and knowledge for the sustainable socio-economic development of Africa

Objectives:

Strengthen the policy framework for knowledge production and STI systems;

Increase institutional and human capacity to produce and disseminate knowledge;

Strengthen the capacities of African societies to monitor, make use of, and to critically assess knowledge and STI for development;

Encourage the participation of youth and especially women in ICTs as regards their use and application in the context of socio-economic development and STI activities and research and development; and to strengthen commercialization of the results of research and links between academia and industry.

Main actions

- Assess, review, develop and harmonize knowledge production policies, including STI policies both at national and regional levels;
- Support and mobilize existing African think-tanks both at regional and subregional level, for decision-making and STI development;
- Strengthen African higher education and research institutions, research, and research, development and innovation (RDI) capacity;
- Promote the twinning of institutions and exchanges of STI experts through North-South, South-South and South-North-South cooperation;
- Improve universal access to information and knowledge as well as build capacity in the field of ICT use in Africa;
- Ensure that more youth and especially young women participate in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers;
- Develop African capacity in the preservation of documentary heritage.

Flagship programme 4 : Fostering science for the sustainable management of Africa's natural resources and disaster risk reduction

Objectives:

Strengthen Africa's scientific institutions and networks for the sustainable use and management of natural resources;

Increase resilience to disasters and to enhance preparedness through the development of early warning systems;

Improve Member States' governance in environmental management for better access and benefit-sharing of natural resources;

Create an enabling environment to develop green and blue economies and move up the natural resources processing value chain.



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Main actions

- Upgrade scientific institutions, in the fields of the environmental, earth, ocean and climate system sciences, through strengthening universities and research centres and mobilizing international science cooperation;
- Train a critical mass of natural resources and disaster risk managers (young skilled people and resourceful scientists and engineers) with the perspective of employability;
- Support the development of tools for disaster risk reduction (DRR);
- Promote and support UNESCO-designated sites to be recognized and used as laboratories and learning platforms for sustainable development at the national and regional level.

Flagship programme 5 : Harnessing the power of Culture for Sustainable Development and Peace in a context of regional integration

Objectives:

Culture (heritage in all its forms and contemporary creativity) is *mainstreamed* into public development policies;

Young people made aware of the values of the heritage and mobilized to protect and safeguard it.

Main actions

- Institutional and human capacity-building and cultural-policy frameworks strengthened;
- Teaching tools and curricula developed and disseminated.

Flagship programme 6 : Promoting an environment conducive to freedom of expression and media development

Objectives:

Improvements in the enabling environment for press freedom;

Strengthening the safety of journalists in Africa;

Strengthening capacities of media institutions and professionals in Africa;

Promoting and strengthening community media as enablers of the free flow of information for development.

Main actions

- Creating policy and regulatory conditions conducive to press freedom;
- Enhancing national, regional and international advocacy for the protection of journalists against impunity;
- Training a critical mass of media professionals in key fields of Africa's development;
- Empowering community radio initiatives in Africa through a supportive policy and regulatory environment;
- Promoting universal access and preservation of information and knowledge.

PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The realization of the flagship programmes requests a specific partnership strategy, which places a strong emphasis on inter-African and South-South partnerships, while promoting North-South and North-South-South cooperation. It aims indeed to take advantage of existing opportunities on the continent as well as those that may come from bilateral and multilateral partners in the world and from the diaspora in particular.

The Organization's specific partnership with the African Union and the regional economic communities (RECs) will focus on the planning of joint action in agreed priority areas and joint advocacy towards partners. There is also a plan to develop a partnership between UNESCO, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (ADB). UNESCO will draw the attention of various cooperation forums with other continents to the projects developed within the strategy with a view to their potential participation and funding. In light of the common poles of interest, particular attention will be given to reinforcing partnerships with regional bodies such as ISESCO, IOF, the Commonwealth and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). Cooperation agreements will also be established with specialized institutions in UNESCO's fields of competences to share expertise on the implementation of joint projects and to exchange information.

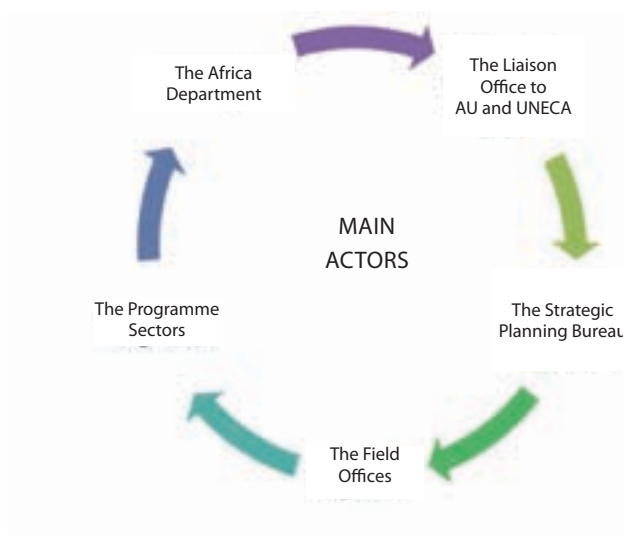
The action will be conducted under the United Nations System Regional Coordination Mechanism that ensures greater coherence of the activities carried out, their complementarity and the pooling of available resources.

The success of the implementation of this operational strategy also lies in the quality and the expansion of the partnership with multiple civil society and private sector stakeholders, notably African.

Finally, particular attention will be paid to innovative mechanisms, such as the self-financing of programmes or the financing of programmes that promote regional integration.

STAKEHOLDERS

The implementation of this strategy requests a clarification of the identification of the roles and responsibilities of the various Secretariat entities:



The Africa Department Its role is more focused on:

- ✓ Institutional and intersectoral coordination of Global Priority Africa and of the reports and core initiatives within its mandate, in close cooperation with the Sectors and Offices concerned;

- ✓ UNESCO's relations with Member States, the African Union and its NEPAD programme, and African subregional communities, in close consultation with the Liaison Office in Addis Ababa and the Sectors and Field Offices concerned, in the context of the African regional integration process;
- ✓ In the context of the reform of UNESCO's field presence, support for the five multisectoral Regional Offices and the category 1 institutes active in the region, backed by a mechanism of regular consultation between the Offices and the Headquarters;
- ✓ Coordination of forward-looking reflection on Africa, notably through the organization of forward-looking meetings at the end of each biennium to ensure/sustain the priorities, involving representatives and experts from all regions;
- ✓ Better integration of UNESCO within the United Nations mechanisms at the regional level, with particular attention paid to the cooperation of Regional Offices concerning the technical and financial aspects with existing mechanisms;
- ✓ Follow-up of the implementation of Priority Africa in close collaboration with the Organization's entities and external partners;
- ✓ Implementation of a communication strategy for Priority Africa, linking Headquarters and Field Offices, in order to enhance awareness of the Organization's activities in the field for a better visibility of Priority Africa.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Priority Africa operational strategy will be supported by a communication strategy in order to promote key aspects of UNESCO-led actions.

It will foster a shared understanding of Priority Africa among internal and external stakeholders.

Widespread dissemination of Priority Africa flagship projects will strengthen partners' support and will increase the projection of the Organization's action on the continent.

It will afford an opportunity not only to formulate a broad vision of UNESCO's future communication activities, resources and implementation schedule but also to evaluate the impact and effects of Priority Africa action taken at the national, sub-regional and regional level.

The establishment of a communication strategy will permit to:

- ✓ *Define* each actor's needs and roles;
- ✓ *Ensure* a coherence between targets, actions means and discourse;
- ✓ *Evaluate* undertaken actions and promote them efficiently;
- ✓ *Facilitate* the flux of information between different actors;
- ✓ *Reinforce* ties and cooperation between actors working towards development in Africa;
- ✓ *Enhance* capacities for mobilizing funds; and
- ✓ *To make* Priority Africa comprehensible and credible.

The Africa Department, the Field Offices, and the Sectors (most notably the Sector for External Relations and Public Information, ERI) will play an essential role in the implementation of this communication strategy.





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