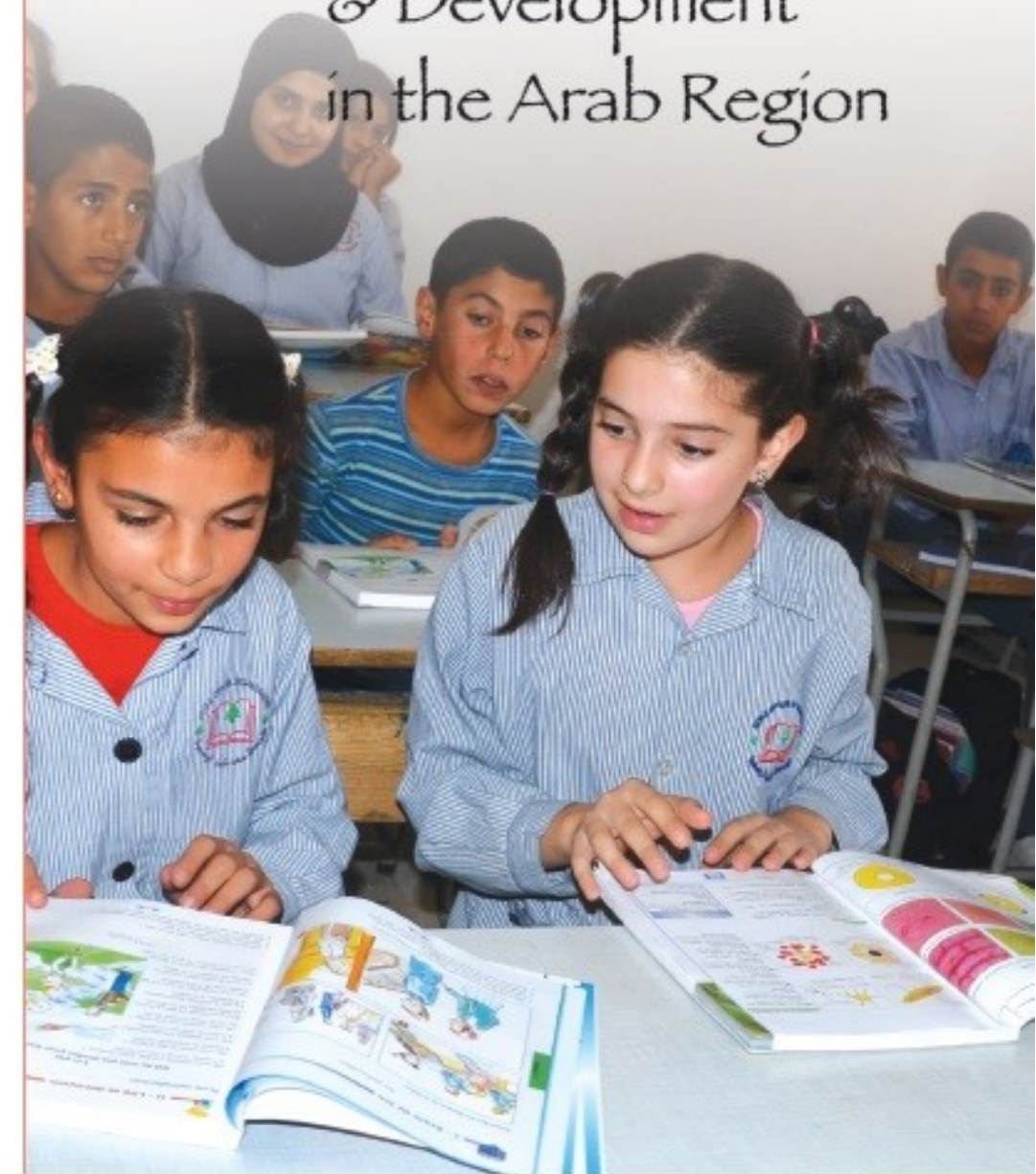




Fostering, Sustainable Peace & Development in the Arab Region



Culture

In today's interconnected world, culture's power to transform societies is clear. Its diverse manifestations – from our cherished historic monuments and museums to traditional practices and contemporary art forms – enrich our everyday lives in countless ways. Heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability. Creativity contributes to building open, inclusive and pluralistic societies. Both heritage and creativity lay the foundations for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies.

The role of UNESCO Beirut Office in Lebanon and Syria is a crucial one considering the uniqueness and richness of this region's cultural heritage, and the threats this heritage is facing due to armed conflict. Preserving heritage sites is one of UNESCO's key goals, and a very challenging one. Thus, UNESCO is dedicating considerable resources to support local authorities in protecting and safeguarding their tangible and intangible heritage, which is considered an essential step towards cherishing cultural pluralism, achieving sustainable peace and economic prosperity.

In Lebanon, just like all over the world, UNESCO is convinced that no development can be sustainable without a strong culture component. Indeed only a human-centred approach to development based on mutual respect and open dialogue among cultures can lead to lasting, inclusive and equitable results. Through its divers programme in Lebanon, UNESCO Office in Beirut focuses particularly on placing culture in the heart of social reconciliation and sustainable development.

In Syria, as a result of the on-going conflict, many of the country's important monuments, including those on the UNESCO World Heritage List, have been severely damaged, while museums and archaeological sites have been looted by organized groups, and subsequently, illicit trafficking of rare artifacts stepped dangerously.

In response to this reality, UNESCO has actively mobilized its partners and the international community to raise awareness on the situation, and assist Syria in protecting all forms of its heritage, be it built, movable, or intangible.

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Social and Human Sciences

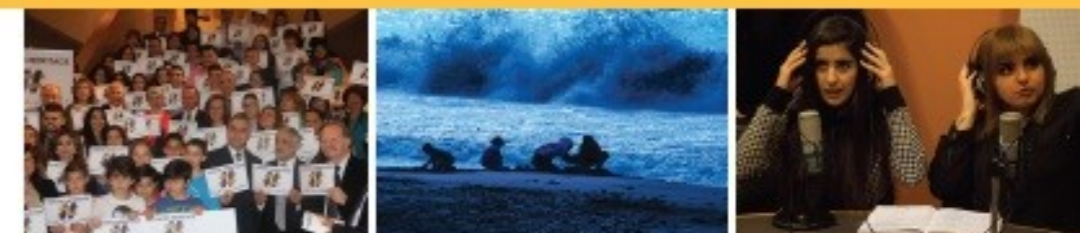
The social and ethical dimensions are central to UNESCO's mandate, as it strives to reach out to the most vulnerable segments of society and to contribute to peace, human rights and poverty eradication through a human rights-based approach in all its fields of competence.

UNESCO Beirut promotes the development and use of social science knowledge that contributes to better understanding and management of social transformations. It focuses on improving the linkage between research and policy-making, including the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development actions and processes, the dissemination of research results and best practices, and capacity building. This programme combats the negative effects of globalization, global environmental change and economic and financial crises in order to create a culture of inclusion and acceptance. An inclusive society is able to resist poverty and inequality, thus creating opportunities for sustainable development.

UNESCO Beirut Office also provides support for activities in the region implemented by UNESCO Headquarters in the field of Ethics, mainly through UNESCO Rabat concerning Human Rights, and the International Centre for Human Sciences in Byblos (Lebanon) concerning Social Sciences, democracy and culture.

One of UNESCO's global priorities is promoting gender equality worldwide. UNESCO Beirut places increasing emphasis on the issue of gender equality. At the regional level, UNESCO Beirut is implementing programmes and activities focusing on advocacy and sensitization on gender equality and on enhancing capacities for gender mainstreaming.

Empowering and educating youth in the Arab region is essential for growing and developing nations and facing regional threats. UNESCO supports policy research and dialogue which promotes the inclusion, engagement, participation, and empowerment of young men and women in partnership with all interested stakeholders.





UNESCO Beirut What we do?

At a time when the world is looking for new ways to build peace and sustainable development, people must rely on the power of intelligence to innovate, expand their horizons and sustain the hope of a new humanism. UNESCO exists to bring this creative intelligence to life. Today, and particularly in the Arab region, UNESCO's message has never been more important.

Since 2011, many Arab countries have been witnessing dramatic social and political changes. Millions of lives are severely affected: the pursuit for education is becoming a real struggle; the region's cultural heritage faces unprecedented threats; the basis required for scientific progress and sustainable development is dangerously hampered; while core values of the 21st century society, such as respect of diversity, active citizenship, social justice, freedom of expression and free access to information, are being severely threatened by violence and extremism.

Aiming to address these setbacks, UNESCO Beirut Office works closely with the citizens of the Arab region to effectively promote universally endorsed values and basic human rights, such as the right for access to education, gender equality and social inclusion, safeguarding cultural heritage and cherishing diversity, and creating a safe and healthy environment that enables freedom of expression and access to information.

In its first role as Cluster Office for Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and the Palestinian Territories, the Beirut Office's mission is to implement UNESCO's Biennial Programme by adapting the implementation of programmes in its fields of competence to the specific characteristics of the region and working to ensure an active presence in each Member State. As a Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States, the Beirut Office is a centre of expertise in the field of Education for the Arab world. In carrying out this mission, the Office serves twenty-two Arab countries in the region in the field of Education, taking into account the cultural variations and different national and sub-regional priorities and concerns.

EDUCATION

UNESCO Beirut's efforts in education are considered to be an integral part of UNESCO's general strategies aiming to improve education worldwide.

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States thrives to strengthen the capacities of the Arab States in delivering quality and relevant Education for All (EFA) at the national level; prepare for the post-2015 era; provide expertise and technical support in the various related fields including teaching and learning processes, curriculum development, institutional management, and policy development; foster partnerships, and set relevant standards in order to assist Arab States build learning societies by creating educational opportunities for all communities, with a special focus on vulnerable and excluded groups. The Regional Bureau and the Cluster and National Offices in the region are committed to ensuring results' sustainability by assisting Arab Member States in achieving UNESCO's global vision in education. This vision aspires to construct a sustainable world with just societies that value knowledge, promote a culture of peace, celebrate diversity and defend human rights.

At the same time, with the aim to promote education in the Arab world as a fundamental right, the Office works with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and civil society organizations to ensure that adequate access is provided for all. With the emerging challenges imposed by instability and armed conflict, access to education is an ultimate priority for UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education. Considerable financial and human resources are being reinvested to prevent further deterioration in this field, particularly in countries affected, directly and indirectly, by conflict.

UNESCO also stimulates experimentation, innovation and policy dialogue in the education sector to ensure continuous change and update to the educational system in the Arab states. The strong links with ministries of education and government agencies facilitate projects' implementation, and eventually achieving its desired goals.



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Natural Science

Within the framework of UNESCO's Major Programme on Natural Sciences, UNESCO Beirut works on promoting science for the benefit of society in the Arab region.

The Office focuses on promoting principles and ethical norms to guide scientific and technological development, and social transformation; Improving human security through a better management of the environment; Enhancing human and institutional capacities in science and technology to allow wider participation in the emerging knowledge societies; and adapting science policy to societal needs.

UNESCO is working to achieve this goal by working on the advancement, transfer, and sharing of scientific knowledge through teaching, research, and cooperation; Applying scientific knowledge to sustainable development and technology; and promoting the equity of access to scientific knowledge to sustainable development and technology knowledge and benefits.



Communication & Information

UNESCO is the only United Nations agency with a specific mandate to protect freedom of expression and information. The Communication and Information (CI) programme at UNESCO in Beirut places emphasis on freedom of expression, unbound access to information, safety of journalists, and media awareness among youth.

UNESCO, in cooperation with national and international NGOs and civil society organizations, promotes advancements in CI in Lebanon by supporting legislation for freedom of expression and by putting it into practice.

As youth in the Arab States are calling for more decisive roles in legislation and in the government process, UNESCO has responded by creating events to promote a greater involvement for youth in planning and decision making.

