



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

perspective 2030

STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION NEWSLETTER

UNESCO faced with its challenges

To respond to the challenges faced today and position UNESCO as an institution for the 21st century, our Organization needs to embark on a strategic transformation with clear objectives. We need to reposition the programmes at the heart of our Organization and enhance our role as a laboratory of ideas. We also need to open up UNESCO and further strengthen the overall efficiency of our operations and modernize the way we operate internally.



Xing Qu
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

UNESCO needs to put in place major changes that will go further than partial reform. This is the rationale behind our Strategic Transformation, supported by three pillars: changing the structure to strengthen management culture; improving the efficiency of UNESCO's means of action, and informing UNESCO's strategic positioning for 2030. This process will run through to the 40th General Conference in November 2019.

A Steering Committee will oversee the Strategic Transformation, chaired by Xing Qu, Deputy Director-General. "A Support Unit has just been set up. It is focused exclusively on the Strategic Transformation process and will ensure that the process runs smoothly", he explains. "We have also set up several thematic working groups, following applications by over 170 internal candidates, which highlights the strong level of engagement among UNESCO staff".

MOVING FORWARD THROUGH EXCHANGES

Four thematic working groups are looking into how we can improve the efficiency of our means of action. The first is looking at how to increase UNESCO's operational efficiency. The second is focused on our internal and external communications with

a view to strengthening the relevance and impact of UNESCO and its values. The third working group is covering partnerships, with a mission to develop a strategy with public and private stakeholders, in line with the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations reform. Lastly, the "UNESCO Presence in the World" group is analyzing the current situation in the field and proposing responses to the needs and challenges of Member States in terms of regional and national development, while looking to optimize our Organization's field office network.

SHARING OUR AMBITION

"I firmly believe that all our staff across our Organization, and Member States, whose engagement is our main strength, will be the key factor for the success of our Transformation".

All our colleagues from Headquarters and Field Offices are invited to engage in this process, which will be decisive for our future. Member States will be kept informed throughout the Strategic Transformation process in order to share the progress made, as well as to get their opinions, critical insights and feedback.

Lastly, a group of leading external personalities will contribute to the review of the Organization's strategic positioning.

September
2018



How is UNESCO aligned with the United Nations reform?

UN reform: both a challenge and an opportunity for UNESCO

Following the UN General Assembly's adoption of Resolution A/RES/72/279 on May 31, 2018 and the creation of the transition team, led by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, the implementation of the ambitious reform of the UN development system will be ramping up over the coming months.

The challenge for UNESCO is to highlight its comparative advantages and effectively mobilize its underused resources. We will need to focus on four areas in particular: better occupying regional space, unifying our field structure around the UN's regional model, proposing a new programmatic approach to support Member States and mobilizing our Organization's wealth. For UNESCO, the UN reform brings new challenges, including the significant increase in costs for creating a stronger and independent system of Resident Coordinators, the proposals to renew the regional approach, and the new UN Development Assistance Frameworks. We also have very limited scope for taking action in terms of financial and staff resources. These challenges, if addressed smartly, could in fact be turned into opportunities by maximising UNESCO's comparative advantage and mobilising currently non- or under-utilised resources. To this end, I believe four areas of attention deserve special consideration:

REGIONAL SPACE

The aim is to improve and clarify the articulation, alignment and coordination of the various roles, functions and responsibilities for the Regional UN Sustainable Development Groups, Regional Economic Commissions and other regional entities. UNESCO needs to develop clear strategies and partnerships at regional level, complemented by UNESCO Country Strategy (UCS), while also strengthening the sharing of information, resources, expertise and skills between the field offices and between field offices and Headquarters.

UNIFYING OUR FIELD OFFICE STRUCTURE

Updating our regional approach represents a challenge for UNESCO, because our Organi-

zation currently operates with two field office network structures, neither of which is really aligned with the UN's regional networks. It is therefore essential for UNESCO to converge towards a unified field office structure, guided by shared conditions and functions across all the regions, repositioning UNESCO beyond national projects and programs, and aligning ourselves with the UN system at regional level.

PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH

Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs present a complex and ambitious agenda for which Member States require support that goes beyond merely policy advice, normative work and standard setting approaches. In fact, this calls for a new model for UNESCO's programmes towards national and regional flagship projects with a 3-pronged approach for support at the levels of policy advice, capacity building and the shaping of models for field implementation. To be able to implement such new model for cooperation, we need a new approach to resource mobilisation and partnership development, and the fixing of current gaps between Sectors and between Headquarters and field.

MOBILIZING UNESCO'S WEALTH

To be able to maximise the benefits and opportunities arising from the UN reform, it will be important that UNESCO compensates its current "poverty" (budget and staff capacities) by mobilising its "wealth" (partnerships, networks, NatComs, Category 2, Chairs, UNITWINs etc). This is therefore an opportune moment to review the UNESCO Comprehensive Partnership Strategy developed in 2013, and more importantly to develop an effective implementation plan.

Hubert Gijzen
DIRECTOR AND
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
UNESCO REGIONAL OFFICE
FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

ideas
in
motion

2030
perspective

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Strategic transformation and gender equality

● Saniye Gülser Corat, **DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

Gender equality has been one of UNESCO's two global priorities since 2008. The Strategic Transformation process represents a unique opportunity to clear the obstacles that are preventing us from leading the way forward in this area.

Three emerging issues could undermine our efforts in terms of gender equality. On the one hand, the extreme ideologies that are gaining ground on all the continents, driven by fundamentalist religious groups, militias and populist governments, some of which are fighting against what they call “gender theory”. UNESCO needs to capitalize on its unique position, in its areas of expertise, to establish dialogue on a global scale looking at the dangers that these ideologies represent for gender equality.

We are also seeing a growing trend to denigrate the role of education in the process of women's empowerment. Even the significant increase in the school enrolment rate for girls is not making it possible to bridge the gender gap from an economic and political perspective. As UNESCO advocates, gender equality considerations should be mainstreamed throughout the educational processes.

Lastly, the role of men and boys in relation to gender equality needs to be carefully considered, particularly through reflection on masculinities. A wide-ranging and in-depth review needs to be carried out to understand gender identities and how they are taken into account within UNESCO's gender equality approach.

INTERNAL CHALLENGES AS WELL

The drive to transform UNESCO's culture and methods cannot be limited to just looking for parity at the expense of substantive equality: singling out candidates' sex in recruitment and promotion processes – without requiring them to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to gender equality – can have a serious impact on our capacities to bring about changes in mindsets. We do not have any internal systems in place ensuring that our staff are accountable and penalizing projects [or staff members] that do not comply the requirements of gender mainstreaming. Currently, funds for non-compliant projects have not been blocked and there is no consequence for staff members. The development of a budget tracking mechanism to track allocations to gender equality has been delayed.

Lastly, we need to go beyond “band-aid” responses to sexual harassment by further strengthening our existing policies and systems and launching an inclusive consultation process that addresses power inequalities in the organizational culture. Staff with expertise in gender equality matters should participate actively in our Strategic Transformation process. To achieve sustainable change to our workplace practices and ethos, all of these issues need to be a core focus with our reflection and our proposed actions.

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The United Nations reform and gender equality are positioned at the heart of UNESCO's Strategic Transformation process.

STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION MONTH

in figures

59

colleague volunteers make up the 4 thematic working groups

over 450

internal and external audit recommendations have been analyzed to assess the Organization's main pitfalls

18+6

18 immediate actions and 6 pilot projects proposed by the working groups in which 10 to be launched immediately

in video



SPOTLIGHT

on Nada Al-Nashif and Hong Kwon:

How does the Transformation link in with the current UN reform?

photo of the month

July and August are generally a holiday period. A large number of the members of the working groups, accompanied by the Support Unit, decided to capitalize on this specific period to move forward with work on the Strategic Transformation. Here are the Co-Leaders of the Strategic Partnerships group in a meeting.

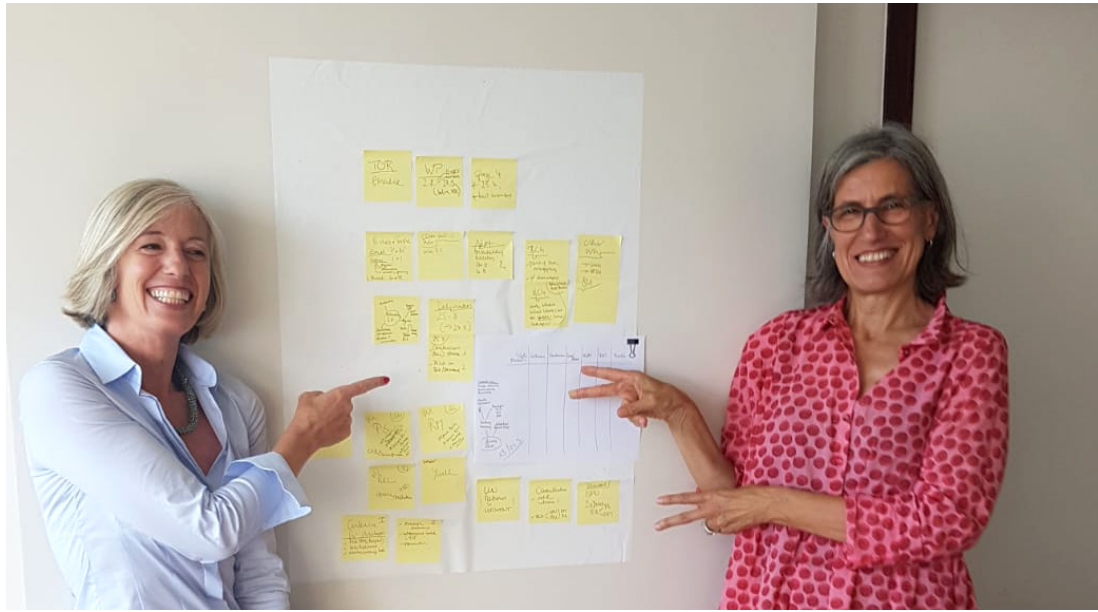


Photo: Unesco

What transformation is needed to position ourselves around the field in line with the 2030 Agenda?

Brasilia: innovative projects

The reform of the UN and UNESCO is coming in the right moment. Our institutions are being challenged to prove their relevance and demonstrate their ability to provide the right responses to a world shaken up by profound transformations and by a significant humanitarian crisis.

In emerging countries like BRICS, which include Brazil, the main challenges involve reducing inequalities and distributing in an equitable manner all the major breakthroughs brought by economic development. These inequalities have a high cost, and this is notably reflected in limited access to education. UNESCO is the lead agency for the global education goal (SDG 4) and must support BRICS and other middle-income countries. In Brazil, UNESCO has a high level of credibility and our relevance is reflected in policy formulation acting as a strategic think tank. The Office is rolling out innovative projects to

further strengthen social protection and its correlation with the development of employment, the reduction of environmental impacts and even the fight against illiteracy. It is also at the heart of cooperation bringing together civil society and the academia, while building broader cooperation with the private sector. For instance, the Brasilia Office is piloting an innovative experience within the UN reform under the Business Operations Strategy (BOS), making it possible to improve the efficiency of project implementation at the country level, while operating with other UN entities.

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Marlova Jovchelovitch Noleto
DIRECTOR OF THE UNESCO OFFICE IN BRASILIA

BRASILIA

field offices

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is a newsletter published by the Support Unit for Transformation

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The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of UNESCO.

BANGKOK

"UNESCO needs to get the ship sailing with a clear direction, with a motivated crew". B. Boer questions the balance in terms of the breakdown between the field offices and Headquarters."

ABUJA

A. Salifou highlights four ideas: capitalizing on the experience gained; ramping up decentralization; strengthening PPPs for education; and improving education systems with new technologies.

NAIROBI

G. Boade, M. Asudi and J. Ogana hope that the work accomplished by UNESCO and its staff around the world will receive greater recognition, that creativity will be encouraged and that we will focus on expertise and efficiency.

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