

**FIFTEENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations Secretariat  
New York, 16-17 February 2017

**CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE FIFTEENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION<sup>1</sup>**

*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

## BRIEF OVERVIEW

The work of UNESCO on international migration extends across all its fields of competence – education, sciences, culture and communication. Broadly aligned to SDG 10, target 7 (“Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”) and SDG 16 (“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”), it is underpinned by the ‘leave no one behind’ mantra of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Within this framework, the following actions are undertaken:

### I. FOSTERING A CULTURE OF LIVING TOGETHER

#### a) *Promoting an inclusive urban governance for migrants*

With SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda as reference points, UNESCO is leveraging its International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR to foster advocacy, awareness-raising and the sharing of experiences on addressing *inter alia* discrimination against migrants.<sup>2</sup> The latter commitment was underscored in the Bologna Declaration containing the outcomes of the ICCAR Global Steering Committee Meeting (April 2016).<sup>3</sup> In 2016, UNESCO launched, with the M. V. Vardinoyannis Foundation and the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, the "Welcoming Cities for Refugees: Promoting Inclusion and Protecting Rights" initiative. Its aim is to empower city administrations and other concerned stakeholders to apply, through policies and programmes, a welcoming urban governance agenda. A main output so far has been the publication of a study (entitled *Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants*) presenting and analyzing main trends, issues and approaches with a focus on Europe, and also putting forward recommendations to foster the inclusion and improve the enjoyment of human rights by refugees and migrants.<sup>4</sup> In 2017, the partners place emphasis on the elaboration and pilot-testing of an operational handbook for city administrations and other concerned stakeholders. Similarly, grassroots research will be conducted in other regions to be followed by the design of appropriate tools for practitioners.

#### b) *Working with the media for migrants' inclusion*

UNESCO's approach is premised on the conviction that media should be an integral part of strategies dealing with refugee issues. The Organization's action has two main components. The first focuses on addressing migrant and refugee-related narratives in the media. A roundtable was convened in March 2016 in Paris. The meeting recommendations informed the elaboration of two projects planned for 2017 and targeting Levant and North African countries respectively. Their aim is to promote a fair representation of refugees and migrants in media, and a better understanding between host communities and newcomers. The second component promotes improved access to information about the rights of refugees. In this respect, two projects involving the development of specialized live radio programmes were implemented in Lebanon and Jordan until early 2016.

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<sup>2</sup> More information on ICCAR is available on: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/coalition-of-cities/>

<sup>3</sup> The full text of the Bologna Declaration of the first ICCAR Global Steering Committee Meeting is available on: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002461/246194e.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The full text of the publication and an introductory video clip on the initiative are available on UNESCO website (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002465/246558e.pdf> and <https://youtu.be/sfLoZEKgdbA>).

*c) Promoting global citizenship education (GCE)*

Within the framework of SDG target 4.7 and specifically on GCE, UNESCO is providing guidance to ministries of education and fostering the sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices through the UNESCO Clearinghouse on GCE (hosted by the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding in Seoul). Events organized in 2016 paid particular attention to youth civic engagement and the prevention of violent extremism. In 2017, the *UNESCO Week for Peace and Sustainable Development: The Role of Education* will be held in Ottawa, Canada.<sup>5</sup>

An integral part of these efforts is raising **awareness** through public campaigns in close collaboration with relevant UNESCO networks to advance respect for diversity and mutual understanding. One such action is the launching in November 2016 of a global contest on “Opening hearts and minds for refugees” in partnership with the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), a global network of 10,000 educational institutions in 181 countries, and the National Commissions for UNESCO. The contest will culminate in the granting of awards in the second half of 2017.

*d) Building skills for intercultural dialogue*

Promoting a culture of living together where all different identities can co-exist and interact is the overarching goal of the Action Plan of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022). UNESCO focuses in 2017 on operationalizing intercultural competencies through the following: a) establishing an Online Hub for e-learning resources on intercultural dialogue; b) developing concrete tools for teaching intercultural competencies; and c) scaling-up research on promoting intercultural competencies to bring to the fore critical and constructive perspectives on the current conceptual shortcomings and practical challenges around the topic. One such example is the project on good socio-cultural practices of migrants and integration in Central Africa in collaboration with the *Centre International de Recherche et de Documentation sur les Traditions et les Langues Africaines* in Cameroun. The next stage could envisage synergies with municipalities of the sub-region with strong migrant communities.

## II. PROMOTING ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Activities in this domain comprise: knowledge-sharing, normative action, specific and innovative actions for sustainable and quality assured long-term solutions, and mobilizing network and partnerships. An overarching initiative launched in 2016 is the preparation of a Paper on the Right to Education of the Refugees. The Paper aims at providing an overview of existing international legal frameworks, highlighting State obligations, as well as main issues and current challenges.

*a) Recognition of higher education qualifications*

Under this heading, work pursues two parallel tracks. Firstly, it promotes the revitalization of the existing regional conventions.<sup>6</sup> The instrument for LAC is currently being revised. Two meetings were held in 2016 and another two are foreseen in 2017 in relation to this process. The goal is to present a draft convention at the forthcoming session of UNESCO’s General Conference in November 2017.

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<sup>5</sup> The concept note of the event is available on:

<http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/UNESCO-PSD-week-2017-concept-note-en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Namely in Africa (2014), Arab States (1978), Arab and European States bordering on the Mediterranean (1976), Asia and the Pacific (2011), Europe (1997), and Latin America and the Caribbean (1974).

The text will subsequently be presented for approval to an International Conference of States parties in 2018. Work under the European Convention, which is under the joint auspices of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, has explicitly touched upon challenges generated by the Syria crisis. Its States Parties adopted on 29 February 2016, the Statement on the Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation,<sup>7</sup> which was followed by an awareness-raising event at UNESCO Headquarters, on 1 March 2016. Secondly, it pursues consultations on the elaboration of a global convention on the recognition of qualifications.<sup>8</sup> A drafting committee met twice in 2016, while two more meetings are foreseen (the first on 13-15 February 2017) in view of the finalization of the draft text that will be submitted to UNESCO's General Conference in 2017.

*b) Access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET)*

Work in this field is driven by the Recommendation concerning TVET adopted in November 2015. Two of its provisions are of particular interest for migrants: article 27 which calls for special attention for migrants and refugees in terms of accessibility to TVET; and article 42 on the mutual recognition of qualifications, as an enabler of learners' and workers' mobility. An important development is also the adoption of the Strategy for TVET (2016-2021).<sup>9</sup> Within that framework, UNESCO will facilitate the debate on cross-border recognition of qualifications by exploring the potential development of international guidelines on quality assurance, based on learning outcomes, and identifying a set of world reference levels to facilitate international comparison and recognition of TVET qualifications. Within these efforts, particular reference will be made to the needs of migrants and refugees.

*c) Education response to the Syria crisis*

The programme "Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth" supports since 2015 the education systems in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.<sup>10</sup> Fully aligned with the commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, it supports the No Lost Generation strategy, while being an integral part of the nationally-led response processes. Capitalizing on previous achievements, the Programme upscaled responses in three areas: (1) access – bridging the access gaps for the youth; (2) quality – bringing back quality at the heart of learning; and (3) system strengthening – empowering education systems for resilience. Examples of activities include: the Jami3ti online platform for the dissemination of information for seekers and providers of higher education opportunities or services in Jordan and abroad (to date, over 2,200 Syrian refugees and 18,000 institutions have registered on the website); the offer of a one-year certified skills development programme with Al Quds College in Amman to at least 400 Jordanian and Syrian youth; the lifeskills and community development training for young Syrian refugees and Lebanese youth; the work on teacher training in the area of psycho-social support and life-skills and vocational skills development in Syria; the establishment of Youth Information Centers in Jordan and Lebanon, providing innovative ICT-based educational activities for Syrian and Lebanese/Jordanian youth. An additional initiative

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<sup>7</sup> The full text of the Statement is available on: [http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/LRCC\\_Statement\\_on\\_the\\_recognition\\_of\\_qualifications\\_held\\_by\\_refugees.pdf](http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/LRCC_Statement_on_the_recognition_of_qualifications_held_by_refugees.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the process, consult the dedicated page on the UNESCO website (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/higher-education/recognition/global-convention-on-the-recognition-of-higher-education-qualification-project/>)

<sup>9</sup> The text of the Strategy can be found on the UNESCO website (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002452/245239e.pdf>).

<sup>10</sup> An overview of the programme activities for 2016-2017 is provided on the following: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244333e.pdf>

currently in the pipeline is the collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Greece on Supporting the Education and Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Greece.

Further to these efforts, UNESCO has been actively engaging in international coordination, *inter alia*, through its membership of the RACE Steering Committee, its contribution to the fourth international pledging conference for the Syria crisis (London, February 2016) and its input to the World Humanitarian Summit. The thread of UNESCO's interventions was the enhanced alignment of humanitarian response plans and longer-term education sector planning.

### III. STRENGTHENING THE MIGRATION EVIDENCE BASE

Within the context of the Organization's work on the right to education and the achievement of SDG 4, an important development is the decision of the International Advisory Group of the Global Education Monitoring Report in June 2016 to dedicate its report that will be launched in late 2018 to education and migration. A concept note of the report will be put for consultation in March 2017.

A key actor in data-gathering on education and the mobility of international students, including of doctoral degree holders, is the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).<sup>11</sup> Based on its annual data collection, the UIS, together with its partners Eurostat and the OECD, produces a range of indicators to track trends in tertiary education at the global, regional and national levels. These data include: enrolment and graduation ratios disaggregated by sex and type of programme; enrolment rates in private and public institutions; and graduates by field of study.

The UIS has also developed a series of unique indicators to track the flows of foreign or mobile students. These data reveal the shifting demand for higher education, especially in developing countries, by showing where students go to study and where they come from. Finally, the UIS led the work of a technical advisory group on developing a range of indicators to monitor the new global education goal and related targets and to consider a measurement agenda.

Within the framework of the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, and in line with the Strategy adopted by its Intergovernmental Council<sup>12</sup>, work is focusing on enhancing research-based and policy-relevant understanding of the social, cultural, economic and political context in which movements of people take place. In 2016, important milestones were: the first Forum of Ministers of Social Development for Central Africa in Yaoundé, in October 2016, on the theme *Insecurity and Migration in Central Africa: Impact on Women and Youth*<sup>13</sup>; and a high-level meeting on sustainable migration in the context of development in November in Brussels, convened as an initiative of the Slovak Presidency of the EU Council, in collaboration with MOST. Both events will feed into the ongoing dialogue regarding a MOST global initiative on migration and development that will be endorsed by the MOST Intergovernmental Council session in Malaysia in March 2017. The initiative will mobilize the research, intergovernmental, policy support and capacity-building pillars of MOST.

Finally, important initiatives are expected to unfold in 2017 in the field of migration and culture in partnership with the IOM. These will be placed within the framework of the *Strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO's Actions for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict* and the related Action Plan - to be examined at the 201<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> More information about the UIS work in tracking trends in higher education is available on its dedicated website (<http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/higher-education>).

<sup>12</sup> The text of the strategy is available on: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002439/243958e.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> The meeting's outcome declaration is available on: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002464/246437F.pdf>

session of the Executive Board – notably under the heading of “integration of culture into humanitarian relief efforts related to displacement”. In this respect, UNESCO is exploring: the inclusion of cultural parameters in the IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), thereby enabling the collection of information on culture from locations that are otherwise difficult to access; the conduct of research, jointly with IOM, on the correlation between attacks against cultural heritage and instances of cultural cleansing and migratory patterns of affected populations – a better understanding of this relationship could facilitate post-conflict return and reintegration or spur research on attacks against culture as early-warning signs for massive human rights violations, including genocide; and cooperation concerning the reconstruction of cities affected by conflicts, as in the case of Aleppo (Syria), based on research findings suggesting that cultural heritage is seen by communities as a key parameter for reconstruction and return.