



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

General Conference

39th session, Paris, 2017

39 C

39 C/17

19 October 2017

Original: English

Item 4.3 of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF 38 C/RESOLUTION 72 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

OUTLINE

Source: 38 C/Resolution 72.

Background: This document is presented in compliance with 38 C/Resolution 72.

Purpose: The document summarizes the progress achieved by UNESCO on this issue since the 38th session of the General Conference.



Job: 201702110

INTRODUCTION

1. The present document highlights the main activities implemented from June 2015-September 2017. More detailed information was made available in reports to the Executive Board over the past two years¹.

PART I

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN PALESTINE

Education

2. During the period under review, UNESCO continued to support the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in Palestine, providing technical assistance, building capacities of national institutions, implementing projects in the West Bank and Gaza, and providing support in the areas of planning, management and coordination of the Education Sector.

In its capacity as the **technical advisor of the Education Sector Working Group** (3. ESWG), within the Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS), UNESCO has coordinated the quarterly ESWG meetings and Annual Sector Reviews (held in September 2015, May 2016 and May 2017), chaired by the MoEHE and since December 2016, co-chaired by Finland. Previously the role of co-chair was filled in by the Kingdom of Belgium. At the Annual Sector Review, policy- and decision-makers, donors and partners, effectively engage in policy dialogue and monitoring and evaluation of recommendations on the implementation of the Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP 2014/2019).

4. UNESCO continued to provide the MoEHE with its technical expertise in reviewing the draft of the **new law on General Education** and providing a consolidated set of comments, as the convening agency for the United Nations Country Team and the Joint Financing Partners of Education in Palestine, to ensure the best possible feedback and recommendations on the draft law in line with relevant international standards. In May 2016, UNESCO concluded its provision of technical assistance to the MoEHE on the new draft law on General Education (see document 200 EX/26) which has been ratified in April 2017.

5. UNESCO provided guidance for the reporting on education within the overall UNCT support to the Palestinian authorities for their reporting on international human rights normative instruments.

6. UNESCO has supported the MoEHE in the **implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4** (*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all and promote lifelong learning*) and plays a key role in the SDG taskforce led by the Prime Minister's Office in the MoEHE's National Committee for SDG 4 and in the various thematic groups that have been set up as part of the education reform (see document 199 EX/20). As part of the overall implementation of SDG 4, UNESCO is assisting the Government in the delivery of its priorities related to education as stated in the draft National Policy Agenda (2018-2022). Special focus is given to pre-school education, technical and vocational training (TVET), inclusive education, as well as higher education.

7. Within the reporting period, UNESCO continued its support to **inclusive and child-friendly education and to higher education**, both through policy and technical advice and through planned interventions on the ground. On a policy and technical level, UNESCO, as the co-chair of the sub-thematic working groups on Inclusive Education and on Higher Education

¹ [199 EX/20](#), [200 EX/26](#), [201 EX/31](#) and [202 EX/39](#).

has supported the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy (which was adopted in October 2015) and is currently supporting the MoEHE with the development of a Higher Education policy for Palestine.

8. From 2013-2016, UNESCO has successfully coordinated the **Education for All (EFA) package** and has conducted an evaluation after completion of the first phase (see document 200 EX/26). Built on the successful outcomes of the previous EFA package, UNESCO continues to support inclusive education and early childhood development through the coordination of an inter-agency programme towards enhancing inclusive education in Palestine.

9. In addition to the implementation of the EFA package in Palestine, UNESCO continued the implementation of a project funded by the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), with further support by the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND), and jointly implemented with the MoEHE and UNRWA, in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The project was implemented from August 2014 to September 2015 and benefitted 30,000 students and more than 13,000 teachers. A series of national capacity building workshops for more than 200 teachers, principals and supervisors were conducted in May 2016 and certificates have been distributed to the trainees at the completion of the training modules.

10. Through the activities of 12 Community Libraries in the West Bank and Gaza, UNESCO continues to support **access to higher education for vulnerable students in Palestine**, with the financial support of the Saudi Committee for the Relief of the Palestinian People. Within the reporting period, the *Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz* Community Libraries have provided more than 53,000 vulnerable higher education students with study and research library facilities and access to computer labs, a variety of trainings, textbooks and printing services. In the context of the Right to Higher Education Advocacy Campaign, the Community Libraries have conducted a variety of activities, especially during the Global Action Week for Education (GAWE), which took place in April 2017. In June 2017, a conference was organized to present the accomplishments, success stories and challenges encountered during the implementation of the project.

11. As part of its support to TVET and within the framework of the NET-MED Youth Project funded by the European Union (EU), UNESCO, together with the Ministers of Labour and Education and the EU, launched **the first Skills Forecasting Model in Palestine** in May 2017. The model is a tool that provides quantitative projections on future supply and demand of skills in the Palestinian labour market, with the aim to support the anticipation and identification of skills needs and to translate this into *curricula* and training programmes as well as employment policies and strategies.

12. As part of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Palestine, UNESCO has been the coordinator of Strategic Priority “Education” of the first United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the State of Palestine, developed by the UNCT for the period 2014-2017. UNESCO was actively involved in also in the preparation of the new **UNDAF for 2018-2022**. UNESCO, together with UNICEF, is the coordinator of Strategic Priority 4: *Leaving No One Behind: Social development and protection*, which includes all UN interventions in the field of Education, Health, Water and Sanitation, Social Protection and Clean Energy (see document 201 EX/31). In June 2017, the UNDAF for Palestine was signed by United Nations agencies and the Government of Palestine.

13. During the period under review, UNESCO supported representatives from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to attend the **Arab Regional Meetings on Education 2030**. The first Arab regional meeting took place in December 2015 in Cairo, Egypt and

concluded the Arab Regional Roadmap for Education 2030. The Second Arab regional on SDG4-Education 2030 took place in March 2017 in Dubai, UAE.

Culture

14. During the period under review, UNESCO continued providing technical assistance, building national capacities of relevant Palestinian cultural institutions, and implementing projects on the ground.

15. In November 2015, UNESCO finalized the urgent **interventions in the archaeological site of Tell Umm Amer-Saint Hillarion Monastery**, inscribed on the Tentative List of Palestine. The interventions included installing new fencing to the site, cleaning and consolidation works.

16. UNESCO provided technical support to the Ministry of Culture and to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in the preparation of **the two Sector Strategies for Culture and Heritage 2017-2022**, included in the **Palestine's National Policy Agenda 2017-2022**, which identified culture and heritage as key development priority areas for the country.

17. UNESCO conducted a variety of activities within the framework of the **#Unite4Heritage Campaign in Palestine**, highlighting the safeguarding of cultural heritage and diversity in Palestine. The activities included storytelling (Palestinian Hikaye) aimed at raising awareness on the role of youth in the preservation of their own tangible and intangible cultural heritage; voluntary and community work at cultural heritage sites in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and training on the role and responsibilities of young people towards the preservation of heritage.

18. UNESCO completed the rehabilitation of 11 historic sites in historic cities and rural localities in Palestine through the project entitled **"Local Development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic built environment in Palestine"**, funded by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The sites were handed over to civil society organizations, which provide public communal services. Through on-job training in the field of cultural heritage preservation, the project further developed the technical capacities of 90 professionals including engineers, architects and contractors. In addition, it contributed to the socioeconomic development in the targeted communities by providing 21,000 working days as temporary job opportunities.

19. Between June 2015 and May 2017, UNESCO continued working with the Palestinian authorities through a series of meetings, discussions and workshops to produce a final **Draft Cultural Heritage Law** in line with the international conventions on culture ratified by Palestine. The final draft was submitted to the Palestinian Cabinet in June 2017 for its endorsement.

20. During the period under review, UNESCO has supported the **strengthening of the capacities of 30 engineers and architects from the Gaza Strip**, by providing a specialized workshop in December 2015 facilitated by local experts. The workshop included training on techniques of lime mortar and limestone conservation and introduced a theoretical overview on conservation both on an international and national level, in addition to practical sessions.

21. UNESCO continued to provide **capacity building** to national experts and academics from line ministries and civil society organizations through multiple training workshops on **the management of cultural and natural heritage sites in Palestine**. From March to April 2017, UNESCO trained professionals from Palestinian ministries, the Environmental Quality Authority, municipalities, universities and cultural heritage organizations on effective management and conservation of cultural and natural heritage sites. This activity also

addressed specific challenges of the Palestinian context impacting the conservation and management of heritage (see Document 202 EX/39).

22. In December 2016, UNESCO and the Representative Office of Norway to the Palestinian Authority signed an agreement to support the **Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem** with the aim to finalize phase III of the museum's project. The project is currently progressing towards the completion of the renovation of the exterior and interior spaces of the museum.

23. UNESCO is updating and upgrading the inventory of **approximately 200 cultural heritage sites in the Gaza Strip**, building on the recommendations of the **Detailed Needs Assessment** that was carried out following the July-August 2014 war.

Communication and Information

24. UNESCO continued to support the Government of Palestine, media outlets and involved civil society organizations working in the field of media development for the advancement of Media and Communication in Palestine, alongside the key recommendations of the 2014 [UNESCO Report on Media Development in Palestine](#).

25. In this framework, in December 2015 UNESCO gathered key actors (including representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, media outlets, national syndicate of journalists, national and international experts) to review the latest draft of the **Palestinian Right of Information Law** and agreed on amendments to bring it further in line with international standards and good practice. By adopting this law, Palestine will become the fifth country in the Arab region to provide a legal protection for citizens' right to access public information (thus specifically fulfilling target 10 of Sustainable Development Goal 16. To this date the Palestinian Government has not yet adopted the draft Law.

26. Thanks to the support of the Government of Sweden through Sida, as well as co-financing through the EU-funded NET-MED Youth Project, UNESCO continued its support to Palestine to become the first country to pilot a **Model Course on the Safety of Journalists** in the Arab region, through a curriculum developed by UNESCO in partnership with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) (the course can be accessed here: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002482/248297e.pdf>).

27. The activity is part of a broader review conducted by UNESCO to assess how the issue of journalists' safety is addressed in journalism curricula in media faculties across the Arab region. Throughout 2016, UNESCO held consultations with Palestinian universities and higher education institutions teaching media and journalism, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate. The goal of the review was to develop a standard course on the safety of journalists, tailored to the needs and conditions of Palestinian students and universities, bringing together policy experts, decision-makers, media institutions, universities, civil society, as well as journalists themselves, in supporting a safer and more professional environment for future journalists (see document 200 EX/25).

28. As part of this activity, in 2016 and March-April 2017 UNESCO trained teachers from universities and colleges across Palestine on practical sessions of the model course, to facilitate their application in the educational plans of involved higher education institutions.

29. Ten media departments of Palestinian universities (six in the West Bank and four in Gaza Strip) included the Course in their curricula in the new academic year starting from September 2017 (see document 202 EX/39).

30. In the reporting period, UNESCO continued to celebrate the World Press Freedom Day in Palestine, jointly with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In May 2016, the celebration included an advocacy campaign on social media and a radio episode on freedom of press and short interviews with media actors from Gaza, with a special focus on journalists with disabilities, which has been broadcasted across the country. UNESCO and OHCHR also supported an interactive theatre performance on the situation of access to information in Palestine.

31. In May 2017, UNESCO and OHCHR jointly organized two parallel events in Ramallah and Gaza, also within the framework of the NET-MED Youth project. The events have been held in the form of round-table discussions with Palestinian youth working in media professional outlets on how media can contribute to peace, dialogue and mutual understanding (see document 202 EX/39).

32. In September 2017, UNESCO brought together and trained Palestinian police, security forces and journalists in a dialogue initiative to foster understanding of the mutually beneficial roles of security and freedom of expression. Police and security forces learned about the important role of freedom of expression in safeguarding democracy, while journalists were sensitized to the functions of security forces. The event provided an opportunity for discussion and exchange, and encouraged common understanding of each other's role in safeguarding democracy, safety and human rights.

Gender Equality

33. During the reporting period, UNESCO's activities to support and promote gender equality in Palestine are implemented in cooperation with the **Gender Policy Institute (GPI)**, funded by the Government of Norway. The agreement with the Norwegian representative office in Palestine to support the transition of the Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre (PWRDC) into Palestine's first Gender-focused Policy Institute (GPI), as a leading think-tank on monitoring and evaluation of gender-related policies, was signed in July 2016. The transition has been facilitated by a broad consultation among key stake-holders and relevant academic, governmental and non-governmental institutions working in the field of gender equality (See document 200 EX/26).

34. To strengthen the relevance and network of GPI, UNESCO has activated **key partnerships with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), and the Institute of Women's Policy Research (IWPR)** for the support to research on and review of gender policies.²

35. In order **to provide the GPI with an independent legal identity**, UNESCO has commissioned a Palestinian lawyer to outline the legal identity of the centre and bylaw requirements according to Palestinian law and processes.

36. **An online library and database** has been developed by UNESCO in order to facilitate the collection of (regional and international) data and research on gender in Palestine which is accessible to all interested stakeholders. The online library can be accessed via following web address: www.pwrdc.ps.

37. UNESCO continues to support **literature and research that promote gender equality in Palestine**. In October 2015, UNESCO organized an official launching of the two volumes of Dr Faiha Abdelhadi's book *The Political Role of Palestinian Women in the 1930s* and *The Political Role of Palestinian Women in 1965-1982*. The books were supported by UNESCO through PWRDC. In addition, UNESCO supported an in-depth research entitled *Women's and*

² More information on IWPR is available at the following web address: <https://iwpr.org/>

Men's Voices, focusing on the impacts on gender relations of the July-August 2014 war in Gaza.

38. UNESCO has supported the **capacity building of the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)** through training courses on advocacy, campaigning for gender equality and the development of policy papers. These training courses were provided to Ministry staff and gender focal point across the Ministries.

39. During the reporting period, UNESCO continued **to support international campaigns that promote gender equality**. In November 2015, UNESCO in partnership with UN Women prepared a video spot launching the *16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign* to send a unified message on the commitment of the United Nations to women's rights, empowerment and combat against GBV³.

NET-MED Youth

40. UNESCO's continued its support to youth in Palestine carried out through the implementation of the **Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth) Project**, funded by the European Union under the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) from 2014-2017.

41. Up until June 2017, UNESCO supported the Higher Council for Youth and Sports in **the preparation of the National Youth Strategy 2017-2022**, which was launched on 8 June 2017.

42. During the reporting period, more than **20 key youth organizations benefited from skill-and capacity-development trainings in public policies, media and employment**. The NET-MED Youth in Palestine is supported by two national youth groups made up of 30 young men and women representatives of youth organizations. These organizations were selected based on their expertise and experience on themes that are relevant to NET-MED Youth: youth employment, youth policies and networking, youth and media representation.

43. NET-MED Youth finalized a **mapping exercise of more than 300 youth organizations in the West Bank and Gaza**, building on previous studies conducted since 2014. The mapping exercise provides key recommendations on the involvement of youth organizations in setting future plans, visions for the future, policies and strategies in order to enhance the active role of youth organizations in the sustainable development of communities.

44. Within the media component of the NET-Med Youth project, **a study on Youth in Palestinian Media was developed** to ensure better representation of youth in the Palestinian media, using the Media Monitoring methodology that focused on a sample of Palestinian Television Channels.

45. During the reporting period, NET-Med Youth carried out a **three-month communication and advocacy campaign** through the development and distribution of billboards in key strategic locations in Palestine. The billboards carried strong messages to raise awareness on priority youth issues such as youth employment and participation in public policies and media. Within this activity, 15 radio shows were broadcasted live to amplify the voices of youth within public discourse.

46. **Palestinian youth organizations have been engaged in the celebration of multiple international days** such as World Radio Day (2015, 2016 and 2017), World Press Freedom

³ The video is available at the following web address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbRBqdJPQKA>

Day (2015, 2016 and 2017), International Youth Day (2015, 2016 and 2017) and International Women's Day (2015 and 2016) via youth-centered activities.

47. As part of the celebrations of the World Radio Day under the global theme *Radio is You!*, UNESCO conducted youth targeted activities through a **wide national radio campaign in February 2017**. The campaign included an online radio survey to improve understanding of youth representation in the media.

48. Within the framework of **World Press Freedom Day (WPF)**, UNESCO supported the participation of two young Palestinians in the *WPF Youth Newsroom* set-up at the 2017 WPF global event, which took place in Jakarta, Indonesia.

49. UNESCO supported Palestinian key partner organizations to participate in regional and global UNESCO events with the aim to facilitate networking opportunities for youth. In April 2017, UNESCO supported the participation of two members of the Palestinian NET-MED Youth working groups at the regional event entitled *An Overview of the Youth of the Mediterranean Region*, organized in Casablanca, Morocco. To foster the participation of Palestinian Youth in the regional youth networks established through the NET-MED project, UNESCO also supported the participation of representatives of the Palestinian NET-MED working groups and of the Higher Council for Youth and Sport in a regional seminar entitled *Researching Youth in the Maghreb: From marginalization to opportunity*, held in Rabat, Morocco in March 2017.

50. As part of the employment component of the NET-MED Youth Project in Palestine, a **Palestinian National Position Paper** was produced in 2014 followed by a **Regional Synthesis** in 2015 of all eight beneficiary countries, to investigate the feasibility of undertaking skills forecasting exercises in each of the targeted countries. Based on the recommendations from these papers, UNESCO initiated in December 2015 the skills forecasting exercise in Palestine, in close collaboration with the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), which is the national partner institution for the exercise, and an established national expert team, consisting of relevant stakeholders, including youth organizations. An external expert team has been commissioned by UNESCO to develop an appropriate methodological approach and provide technical capacity building for the skills forecasting exercise in Palestine. The first skills forecasting model in Palestine was launched in May 2017.

PART II

THE SITUATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

51. As reported in the 2015 report (document 38 C/17), the project for Syrian students in the occupied Syrian Golan launched in 2009 and financed by Japanese Funds-in-Trust ended in March 2013. Without further extrabudgetary resources, UNESCO has so far not been in a capacity to continue providing this assistance.