



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Executive Board

Two hundred and twelfth session

# 212 EX/44

PARIS, 6 October 2021  
Original: English

Item 44 of the provisional agenda

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF 40 C/RESOLUTION 67 AND 211 EX/DECISION 34 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

### **SUMMARY**

The present document is submitted pursuant to 211 EX/Decision 34 and 40 C/Resolution 67.

It reports on assistance provided to the Palestinian Authority and to relevant Palestinian stakeholders, and on developments since the 211th session of the Executive Board.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

Decision required: paragraph 30



Job: 202103108

## INTRODUCTION

1. The reporting period is from February to September 2021.
2. Detailed information on UNESCO's activities in Gaza as well as the impact of the recent conflict on cultural and educational facilities are provided in document 212 EX/43 "Occupied Palestine" and is therefore not reported on in the present document.

## EDUCATION:

3. The protracted crisis continues in Palestine, gravely impacting the education situation of Palestinians as well as their basic human rights. In this context, UNESCO continues to ensure its support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, focusing on inclusive, quality education and lifelong learning, through the provision of policy advice and field interventions, as well as through its role as a technical advisor to the Education Sector Working Group. UNESCO is also leading the Higher Education thematic working group and the newly established working groups on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Quality Education.

4. UNESCO has strengthened its support to the Ministry of Education through the education reform framework in three priority areas: distance learning, quality assurance and governance. Strategic policy papers developed to support the reform were presented at the high-level conference on the Development of the Palestinian Education System, organized by the Ministry in cooperation with UNESCO on 29 and 30 June 2021. The conference brought together a wide range of stakeholders and provided an opportunity to share global, regional and national experiences on education transformation related to governance, quality education, assessments, and digital education.

5. Moreover, following its support to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research on the revision of its Sector Strategy to take new developments into consideration, UNESCO will focus on the monitoring and evaluation framework, which will then contribute to progress towards achieving SDG4.

6. With the reprogrammed Education Cannot Wait (ECW) funds, UNESCO has conducted psychosocial support activities to mitigate the harmful impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent political crisis. Activities were conducted in 20 schools in marginalized areas of the West Bank, mainly area C, and East Jerusalem. A short video game on healthy lifestyles and psychosocial support has been finalized, which together with 16 videos, will raise awareness through social media and educational online platforms.

7. In addition, UNESCO, building on previous experience, has conducted 100 summer camps in the West Bank for grades 1 to 4 to bridge the learning loss of students in Arabic and Math subjects through sport, art, drama, dance, music, and storytelling activities. In parallel, learning loss assessment has been conducted in both the West Bank and Gaza to identify the learning loss parameters and to design the long-term approach and program in this regard. Through the Capacity Development for Education (CapED) programme and within ECW funding, support to the Educational TV Channel will also continue to be provided through the provision of needed equipment and related training. A short video was produced with the German Cooperation for International Cooperation (GIZ) aiming at raising awareness about the importance of the technical and vocational education and training in Palestine.

## CULTURE:

8. During the first half of 2021, UNESCO's work and the implementation of cultural activities continued to be affected by lockdowns and curfews due to unpredictable spikes in COVID-19 cases.

UNESCO and its main partners were however able to implement ongoing activities and projects with an increased capacity and better preparation.

9. The no-cost extension until 30 June 2021 of the project “Local development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic built environment in Palestine” funded by Sweden enabled UNESCO to complete the remaining project activities that were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include a publication on success stories and best practices of the project, the support to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in documenting and inventorying archaeological artifacts in its storage at the Ministry’s premises, the operationalization of the Hebron Old Town Museum which was rehabilitated by UNESCO, as well as the establishment of the Palestinian Virtual Museum featuring 40 digitized archaeological objects from different historical periods through a website and two mobile applications.

10. UNESCO continued supporting, through the World Heritage Fund, the elaboration of the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) for the World Heritage site of [“Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town”](#) as well as the preparation of a Nomination Dossier for the cultural heritage site [“Jericho Millenary City, Archaeological and Historical Urban Development”](#). In June 2021, UNESCO was able to launch an activity in the World Heritage property [“Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir”](#) to develop some technical guidelines and detailed urban planning codes and by-laws to effectively manage the urban transformation in the site. Two specialized institutions have been contracted to implement this activity between June and December 2021, which will be conducted in close cooperation with MoTA, the Municipality of Battir and the Ministry of Local Government; the final outcomes will be ready towards end of 2021.

11. The renovation works in the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem, funded by Norway, continued during the reporting period despite some delays due to outbreaks of Covid-19 cases and related restrictions. The needed interventions to repair the damages caused by 2018 fire accident in the site as well as the compliance with the Civil Defense safety requirements are being finalized. The second half of the year will be dedicated not only to the completion of these works, but also and particularly to the development of concrete ideas on the multimedia content of the Museum and to its museography, in close coordination with the relevant authorities and other stakeholders.

12. UNESCO continued to support the Ministry of Culture (MoC) in its process of adopting a Law for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Palestine, as well as upgrading its Digital Intangible Cultural Heritage Registry in order to present the living heritage elements in digital format and make information accessible to the public for documentation, research and promotional purposes. As part of UNESCO’s Intersectoral Initiative ‘Education and Culture together in action to advance the SDGs, a preliminary internal ‘Desk Review on Living Heritage and Education’ for the West Bank and Gaza is currently in progress to strengthen linkages between the safeguarding of living heritage and education.

13. The MoC was supported also through the project “ Re|Shaping [Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#)” funded by Sweden under the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. UNESCO recruited a national researcher and a member of the Convention’s Expert Facility to conduct a study to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the culture sector as well as to explore investment opportunities in technology, including digital technology, as alternative means of supporting and promoting culture in times of emergencies. Through this activity, surveys and interviews were carried out, and results will be discussed during a workshop that will bring together the public sector and civil society. It is expected that the workshop will come up with a clear way forward with regard the use of digital environment for promoting culture.

14. To celebrate the International Jazz Day, the UNESCO Ramallah Office featured the Trio Aghsan, Trio Karazon and Trio RMR who performed in the Old City of Jerusalem and in Bethlehem (29-30 April 2021). A one-day virtual workshop on the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD)

targeting 45 participants from civil society organizations and cultural centres was conducted online on 26 May 2021 and was facilitated by an expert from the 2005 Convention's Expert Facility.

15. In the framework of the UNESCO/EU project [Supporting new regulatory frameworks to strengthen the cultural and creative industries and promote South-South cooperation](#), UNESCO is supporting the MoC in establishing a national body for cinema that will improve the Palestinian film sector through the development of film regulations. Concerning the study based on the Culture|2030 Indicators methodology that aims at measuring and assessing the transversal contribution of the culture sector to the SDGs, after a new round of consultation with the Ministry of Culture as well as with the DROSOS FOUNDATION which is the main partner and is co-financing this activity, UNESCO is finalizing the report that will be presented in fall 2021.

## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

16. During the reporting period, a high number of media freedom violations were recorded in Palestine. According to the Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA), 308 media freedom violations were recorded between February and July 2021. The number of cases was highest in June and July 2021, with 126 and 122 cases, respectively. These included online and offline attacks against journalists, arrests, confiscation of equipment or demolition of premises. In May 2021, IDF destroyed a tower block in Gaza that housed the offices of several local and international media outlets.

17. In this context, the UNESCO Ramallah Office, Palestine, continued its to provide support on freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, as well as policy advice on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Internet Universality.

18. In the area of freedom of expression, UNESCO implemented several capacity-building activities on covering the planned elections in Palestine. Two training workshops for journalists were organized in partnership with the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, and the Witness Center for Citizen Rights and Social Development (Shahed) on 9 and 10 April 2021 in Nablus. The training focused on electoral coverage, verification of information during elections and fact-checking. Another training session was organized on 28-29 April in cooperation with the Independent Commission for Human Rights, for coordinators of electoral media campaigns in Palestine. The training focused on media coverage of elections and interacting with journalists during media campaigns.

19. UNESCO also pursued awareness-raising activities in particular through the celebration of World Press Freedom Day 2021, both at national and regional levels. A short video was produced casting journalists in the field, with particular attention to women journalists, gender equality and the challenges faced by journalists. The video was widely shared on social media.

20. As regards safety of journalists, UNESCO continued its support to the [National Mechanism for Monitoring Safety of Journalists in Palestine](#), established in 2019, by reinforcing the capacities of members to monitor and report on the safety of journalists in the West Bank and Gaza. This mechanism was also established to support the contribution of Palestine to international reporting on safety such as the UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity, the Universal Periodic Review and reporting on the implementation of SDG indicator 16.10.1 as regards the safety of journalists. In June, Palestine submitted to UNESCO its response regarding the status of investigations into the killings of journalists recorded by the Organization.

21. The Secretariat received a letter on 17 May 2021 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine and another letter from the Permanent Delegation of Palestine to UNESCO addressed to the UNESCO Director-General on 11 June 2021, expressing concern over recent "Israeli violations against media and freedom of expression".

22. The UNESCO Ramallah Office finalized the first National Policy Background Document on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Policy, in preparation for a National Strategy in Palestine, based on the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Policy Guidelines and the model MIL Curriculum. The policy paper was developed taking into consideration local realities and the country's response to COVID-19. The document was presented and discussed with various stakeholders in June 2021 in cooperation with the Education Sector unit in the UNESCO Ramallah Office. This resulted in the forming of a new Thematic Working Group on Media and Information Literacy by the Ministry of Education, co-chaired by UNESCO.

23. The UNESCO Ramallah Office continued to support preparations for the country's first national assessment on the state of Internet development, using UNESCO's Internet Universality Indicators framework based on the ROAM principles (Human Rights, Openness, Accessibility, and Multi-stakeholder participation). The work is being carried out in collaboration with the Arab Center for Social Media Advancement (Hamleh) and the final report is expected to be published by the end of 2021.

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

24. UNESCO supports and promotes Gender Equality in Palestine through mainstreaming gender in all of its activities implemented in the field of culture, education as well as communication and information.

25. In the framework of the Re|Shaping Cultural Policies project, a fourth debate of the #ResiliArt series was organised on 9 March 2021 on the occasion of the International Women's Day. The debate was part of a series of talks, awareness spots, radio episodes and debates organised by the UNESCO Ramallah Office from 8 to 16 March 2021 to highlight the leading role women have in the fields of education, communication and information as well as culture.

26. To celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March, two radio episodes on the role of women in the media were broadcast live, in partnership with UN Women and Radio Philistia. These episodes created an open platform for sharing experiences, shedding light on the reality for journalists in Palestine, and the specific challenges faced by women journalists.

27. This resulted in the signing of an agreement between UNESCO and UN Women in Palestine for increased collaboration on media and gender, particularly focusing on media monitoring for selected media institutions and building the capacities of media professionals.

## **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

28. Youth empowerment continues to be targeted in all of UNESCO main programme areas, notably through the development of the TVET components. Within the reporting period, UNESCO, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), conducted training on skills anticipation to technical TVET staff from ministries of education, higher education and labour. In addition, UNESCO organized in summer 2021 training on entrepreneurship for TVET teachers and developed regional guidelines and national training on skills forecasting, within the EU-funded Youth for Employment in the Mediterranean (YEM) project. To ensure the sustainability of these TVET interventions, UNESCO has succeeded to raise some USD 2 million funding from the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel), and USD 700,000 from the Government of Japan to strengthen TVET and distance learning by enhancing innovative approaches and mainstreaming technical, digital and transversal skills for youth to reduce the high unemployment rate in Palestine.

## **Occupied Syrian Golan**

29. 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, this assistance could not be provided over the reporting period.

## Proposed draft decision

30. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered documents 212 EX/43 and 212 EX/44,
2. Recalling its previous decisions concerning “Educational and Cultural Institutions in the Occupied Arab Territories”,
3. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 214th session and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

## ANNEX



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

### Executive Board Two hundred and twelfth session

212 EX/PX/DR.44.1  
PARIS, 6 October 2021  
Original: English

### PROGRAMME AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMISSION (PX)

#### Item 44 IMPLEMENTATION OF 40 C/RESOLUTION 67 AND 211 EX/DECISION 34 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

#### DRAFT DECISION

The Executive Board,

#### I OCCUPIED PALESTINE

1. Recalling 185 EX/Decision 36 and 38 C/Resolution 72 as well as Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with regard to the right to education, Articles 24, 50 and 94 of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to the denial of the right of children to education, as well as the Hague Convention (1954) and its additional Protocols and the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), also recalling the International Court of Justice’s Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 on the “Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”,
2. Having examined documents 212 EX/43 and 212 EX/44,
3. Committed to the safeguarding of monuments, works of art, manuscripts, books and other historical and cultural properties to be protected in the event of conflict, as well as the safeguarding of schools and all educational facilities,
4. Deplores the damaging impact of the military confrontations on the fields of competence of UNESCO in the Gaza Strip, particularly education and cultural institutions;

5. Deeply concerned by the Israeli army violations against Palestinian universities and schools, demands that the Israeli authorities immediately halt actions that violate UNESCO principles and the provisions of the world declaration for education for all (1990) and reaffirms, in this regard, that schools, universities and cultural heritage sites enjoy special protection and should not be targeted;
6. Expresses its growing concern about the harmful impact of the Wall on the activities of educational and cultural institutions, and demands, in this regard, that Israel, the occupying Power, cease all of its settlement activities, including the construction of the Wall and other measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem and the Cremisan Monastery in the Bethlehem Governorate, which harm the social fabric of Palestinian society and prevent Palestinian school children and students from exercising fully their right to education;
7. Notes with deep concern the Israeli censorship of the Palestinian curricula of schools and universities in East Jerusalem, and urges the Israeli authorities to immediately halt this censorship;
8. Expresses its appreciation for the substantial contributions of all concerned Member States and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to UNESCO's action in Palestine as well as for building of schools for Palestinian children such as the school of Tana, near Nablus and the two schools in Khan Al-Ahmar and in Abu Nuwar near Jerusalem, and appeals to them to continue assisting UNESCO in this endeavour;
9. Deeply regrets the destruction by the Israeli authorities of schools, including the school in Abu Nuwar and the school in Tana, and calls on the Israeli authorities to halt plans for further demolition, including of the school in Khan Al-Ahmar;
10. Thanks the Director-General for the results that have been obtained in favour of the protection, reconstruction, rehabilitation and restoration of the Palestinian archaeological sites and cultural heritage, invites her to reinforce her action in this regard and to strengthen UNESCO's assistance to the Palestinian educational and cultural institutions in order to address the needs for capacity building in UNESCO's fields of competence by, *inter alia*, expanding the financial assistance programme for Palestinian students and school children, and requests her to organize, as soon as possible, the ninth meeting of the Joint UNESCO-Palestine Committee;

## **II OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN**

11. Also invites the Director-General:
  - (a) to continue the efforts she is making to preserve the human, social and cultural fabric of the occupied Syrian Golan, in accordance with the relevant provisions of its decisions;
  - (b) to undertake efforts to offer appropriate curricula, and to provide more grants and adequate assistance to the educational and cultural institutions of the occupied Syrian Golan;
  - (c) to dispatch an expert to assess and evaluate the needs of the educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Syrian Golan and report to her before the 214th session of the Executive Board;

## **III**

12. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 214th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.

**ANNEX TO THE DOCUMENT**

During the reporting period, the following correspondence has been received by the Secretariat in relation to this item:

<b>Date</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Subject</b>
18 March 2021	Ambassador, Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO	<a href="#">Sebastia</a>
17 May 2021	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine	<a href="#">Violations against media and freedom of expression</a>
19 May 2021	Minister of Culture of Palestine	<a href="#">Violations in the field of culture</a>
11 June 2021	Ambassador, Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO	<a href="#">Violations against media and freedom of expression</a>