



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

41st session, Paris, 2021

41 C

41 C/17

8 November 2021

Original: English

Item 5.3 of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF 40 C/RESOLUTION 67 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

OUTLINE

Background: 40 C/Resolution 67.

Purpose: The document presents highlights of key activities implemented by UNESCO on this issue since the 40th session of the General Conference.

Decision required: paragraph 48.



Job: 202103981

INTRODUCTION

1. The present document highlights the main activities implemented by UNESCO and achievements realized since the 40th session of the General Conference. 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. Palestine is affected by a protracted crisis, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and tensions in East Jerusalem and the Gaza strip. Access to education remains a challenge. Currently, 2.5 million people, including 1.2 million children, living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, need humanitarian assistance².

3. The blockade on the Gaza strip continues to exacerbate the crisis. Due to the recent escalation in Gaza in May 2021, pupils of three damaged schools are attending nearby facilities until reconstruction is complete. Education Cluster partners have managed to finish all major rehabilitation work in the other affected schools³. Following an initial assessment conducted in June 2021, the Education Cluster in Gaza reported that 141 education facilities had been damaged of which 10 had sustained major damages during the escalation. Schools in Gaza remained closed following the cease-fire on 21 May 2021, affecting almost 600,000 learners. Furthermore 21,300 education staff were also affected.

4. Since early 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 has led to the prolonged closure of schools. Around 65 per cent of schools operate on a double-shift system, resulting in reduced hours in core subjects. Schools in Gaza and the West Bank reopened for the new school year on 16 August 2021. Education is now taking place face-to-face in all schools, subject to safety protocols.

5. As part of its response to the learning crisis, UNESCO in close coordination with the Education Cluster and other partners, conducted a **Rapid Needs Assessment for Higher Education in Gaza**. It revealed that all targeted 12 higher education institutions have been affected by the conflict, and various material damages have been reported. In addition, the psychological impact among the students in the targeted higher education institutions was assessed. This also contributed to the overall **Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA)**, launched by the World Bank, in cooperation with the EU and the United Nations in June 2021.

6. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO and the Ministry of Education (MoE) co-led the **Task Force on Distance Learning**, in collaboration with its partners in the Education Cluster. As a member of the task force, UNESCO supported the development of distance learning modalities, including the upgrade of the Ministry's official website and its E-platform "Tammal" to provide interactive platforms for students and community. To complement its efforts to minimize the effects of the pandemic, UNESCO has also been supporting the establishment of an educational TV channel and the implementation of the Global Digital Library project, where short children stories were translated to Arabic to facilitate home schooling and self-learning.

¹ 212 EX/44, 211 EX/34, 210 EX/37 and 209 EX/25.

² <https://www.unicef.org/media/105746/file/%20State%20of%20Palestine-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.2%20MidYear-2021.pdf>.

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/occupied-palestinian-territory-opt-response-escalation-opt-6>

7. Other activities on distance learning included teacher training to mainstream ICT competences and to enable the use of distance learning solutions like setting up classes at home and ensuring children's safety, protection and emotional and psychological needs once the school reopened in Palestine. Consequently, UNESCO and the MoE organized the policy dialogue on school reopening, which supported the Ministry in developing its school reopening plan, in August 2020.

8. UNESCO also supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) in its **education reform process in three priority areas, including distance learning, quality assurance and governance**. UNESCO and the MoE developed strategic policy papers and action plans to implement policy recommendations. The papers were presented at a high-level Policy 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.

9. While in 2020, UNESCO supported the Ministry of Higher Education in revising its sector strategy to include SDG 4 indicators and integrate new developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 support was provided to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in developing its Monitoring and Evaluation System.

10. Moreover, within the framework of the Education Cannot Wait Multi-Year Resilience Programme (ECW/MYRP) for Palestine, UNESCO has supported the MoE through an assessment study on the learning losses of students in West Bank and Gaza, and the preparation of remedial actions to address learning gaps. With the reprogrammed ECW funds, UNESCO conducted psychosocial support activities to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and developed **16 videos as well as a video game on healthy lifestyles and psychosocial support** to raise awareness through social media and educational online platforms.

11. Additionally, in the framework of the ECW/MYRP programme, UNESCO worked at strengthening the resilience of communities, children, youth and their families in targeted areas in Gaza, East Jerusalem and Area C, through improved access to inclusive, equitable education and learning opportunities. **A training manual on inclusive education** was developed and a group of Master trainers was trained on how to ensure that all students receive quality education. This training will be scaled up to 3,000 teachers. UNESCO also provided remedial education for children in hospitals (determination schools) conducting training for teachers in 2020.

12. In parallel, UNESCO conducted teaching and learning activities using sport, drama, storytelling and music over the summer 2021, targeting children from grades 1-4 in 100 schools in West Bank, focusing on addressing the learning loss mainly in Arabic and Mathematics. This built upon previous activities related to sport, theater and storytelling, which were conducted in 20 selected schools across the West Bank to provide psychosocial support and mitigate the harmful impact of the pandemic, while using a blended learning approach. Similar activities will be conducted in Gaza during the school year.

13. Within the **Youth for Employment in the Mediterranean project (YEM)**, UNESCO developed **a skill forecasting model** for Palestine in order to provide more information about labour market needs to inform policies and help youth in the choices of their future career options. The launch event was held in Ramallah on February 2020, in partnership with the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS). In 2020, UNESCO also organized TVET policy dialogue on the tourism sector, one of the most hit by the pandemic, developed the updated skills forecasting report, pilot tested the use of data from online job board and provided capacity building for the government staff on how to update the model. Further training in 2021 will be conducted to ensure the sustainability of the model, based on a

developed guide on the skills forecasting. UNESCO also provided training on entrepreneurial skills to three line-ministries in 2021.

14. Finally, UNESCO will continue its support to **TVET in Gaza through establishing two vocational units in two specializations mainly web and graphic design**, with funding received from the Japanese Government. Further support to TVET will be also enhanced through the newly established funding agreement with the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel).

CULTURE

15. During the period under review, the implementation of cultural activities, including physical rehabilitation projects, performances and exhibitions, has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown and safety measures had an impact on several UNESCO activities for built heritage while also affecting the cultural life and livelihood of artists in Palestine. UNESCO and its main partners were however able to adapt their working methods and implement an important number of activities.

16. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the UNESCO Ramallah Office took part in the discussions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the culture sector and the required response, particularly in the framework of the broader UNCT Development Response Plan to the COVID-19. Concrete initiatives have been implemented in coordination with relevant national stakeholders such as the organization of **four #ResiliArt debates** focusing on youth, status of women, the production of online artistic forms and arts education, and the production of **four online storytelling videos** published on social media platforms in support of children's education and families' entertainment.

17. UNESCO also supported the Ministry of Culture in a comprehensive **study to assess the impact of COVID-19 on culture** and explore the possibility of investing in digital technology as an alternative sphere to support and promote Palestinian culture in times of emergencies. The study provides recommendations and ideas to the national authorities to develop a full-fledged strategy for the promotion of culture during a pandemic or other crisis.

18. Despite the additional measures restricting movements and gatherings, UNESCO continued to provide technical assistance, building national capacities of relevant Palestinian cultural institutions, and implementing projects on the ground. The project "**Local Development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic built environment in Palestine**", funded by Sweden, has been successfully completed on 30 June 2021. Through this project, UNESCO:

- Completed the rehabilitation of six historic sites in Palestine that were handed over to civil society organizations in order to provide public communal services.
- Supported the operationalization of the *Hebron Old Town Museum*, which is hosted in a historic building rehabilitated by UNESCO.
- Organized in December 2020 a three-day online training on Impact Assessment for World Heritage, with the participation of 30 professionals from a wide range of disciplines and institutions. The training aimed at strengthening the capacities of participants following the most updated international methodology on this topic, and was for the first time broadcasted live on UNESCO Ramallah Office Facebook page to expand its outreach and impact beyond heritage professionals and national borders.
- In cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), prepared the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) of Sebastia, a site included since 2012 on the Tentative List of Palestine.

- In close coordination with the MoTA, developed the *Virtual Museum* of archaeological objects for educational purposes and public use. The *Virtual Museum* contains digitized objects from different historical periods found during archaeological excavations in Palestine and can be accessed through an online platform and a mobile application.
- Supported MoTA in inventorying and documenting archaeological artifacts as well as enhancing the storing capacity at the Ministry's premises.
- Produced a publication in English and Arabic on the project experience and success stories as well as a promotional video on the project, highlighting its different components and main achievements.

19. Through the International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund, UNESCO provided technical support to MoTA for the elaboration of a Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) for the World Heritage property of "**Hebron/AI-Khalil Old Town**" as well as for the preparation of a Nomination Dossier for the cultural heritage site "**Ancient Jericho / Tell es-Sultan**". UNESCO is working with MoTA to develop a detailed urban plan and building codes to manage the growing urban transformation in the World Heritage Property "**Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir**", in line with the endorsed CMP of the site. Thanks to a contribution from France, UNESCO is planning conservation interventions in the **Anthedon Harbour**, the first known seaport of Gaza listed since 2012 on the Tentative List of Palestine. Site visits and consultations with MoTA and other concerned stakeholders concluded the need to implement conservation and structural consolidation works for the revealed ruins facing the seashore.

20. UNESCO continues to supervise the rehabilitation works in the **Riwaya museum in Bethlehem**, funded by the Government of Norway, with the objective to open a multimedia interactive exhibition on Palestinian culture. The project has been extended until December 2021 with a generous additional contribution, which helped UNESCO tackle technical challenges in the site including upgrading public safety measures in line with the requirements of the Palestinian Civil Defense. A final rehabilitation phase is in the preparation process, after which the Museum will be ready for content development.

21. UNESCO organized in December 2019 the first capacity-building training on the UNESCO **1970 and 1954 Conventions** in close collaboration with MoTA and the Ministry of Interior (MoI). More than 30 participants took part in the four-day training, representing different departments at MoTA and MoI, as well as private practitioners, conservators and collectors. The various sessions of the training were facilitated by experts in the 1970 and 1954 Conventions, as well as the Italian Carabinieri Art Squad (Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale) and INTERPOL. Palestine actively participated as well in the 'Online Training for the Arab States on the 1954 Hague Convention and its Protocols' held in June 2021, as well as in the 'Online Regional Dialogue for Arab States in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the 1970 Convention' organized in September 2021.

22. In December 2020, UNESCO Ramallah Office completed the project entitled "**Strengthening National Capacities for Safeguarding Palestinian Intangible Cultural Heritage**" funded by the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism. The project, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and civil society organizations, contributed to strengthening their capacities in better understanding the principles of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and advancing the establishment of a policy framework for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, including through the elaboration of a Draft Law for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Palestine. The project contributed drawing up community-based inventories in the West Bank and Gaza, and 17 community-based pilot inventorying videos have been produced and published to raise awareness about the importance of intangible cultural heritage for the resilience and identity of communities. UNESCO also continued to support the Ministry of Culture to upgrade its Digital Intangible Cultural Heritage Registry.

23. In the context of the implementation of the intersectoral initiative on culture and education and the programme for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education of the 2003 Convention, a preliminary internal 'Desk Review on Living Heritage and Education' has been conducted in 2021 on the existing formal curricula that are in use by schools from grade 1-grade 12 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the same vein, within the project entitled "**Developing Digital skills and Education for Sustainable Development through Distance Learning in Palestine**" funded by the Government of Japan, the UNESCO Ramallah Office is implementing several intersectoral activities, focusing on providing digital and transversal skills for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students. The focus of the culture-output within the project activities is on traditional crafts and associated skills and knowledge.

24. In close coordination with MoC, UNESCO continued implementing the project **ReShaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expression** that started in May 2019 with the financial support of Sweden. Through this project, multi-stakeholder consultation meetings took place, a national team was formed by a cabinet decree, and a specialized training on the Quadrennial Periodic Report (QPR) on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, was organized in December 2019. The data collection continued during the first half of 2020 and the QPR of Palestine was duly submitted on 13 October 2020. A one-day training was organized in May 2021 on the UNESCO **International Fund for Cultural Diversity** (IFCD) with 45 participants from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

25. Palestine was among the beneficiary countries of the EU/UNESCO programme on **Supporting new regulatory frameworks to strengthen the cultural and creative industries**, through which MoC aims at improving the Palestinian film infrastructure by developing film policies and directories, including a directory on Palestinian films and another one on production, as well as an operational manual of a dedicated national institution. In coordination with the MoC and with the support of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), UNESCO, in partnership and with co-financing from the DROSOS Foundation, is conducting a **study** that aims at measuring and assessing the transversal contribution of culture to the SDGs in Palestine.

26. Following the hostilities in Gaza in May 2021, the UNESCO Ramallah Office received for the first time ever a grant from the UNESCO **Heritage Emergency Fund** (HEF) to comprehensively assess the impact of the conflict on the culture sector in Gaza through a Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). The funding from the HEF will also contribute to the implementation of urgent interventions in support to cultural centers, as well as practitioners and artists through artistic activities in the field of music, theatre and fine arts, while targeting traumatized youth and children by giving them the opportunity to engage in interactive initiatives and to express themselves through artistic means.

27. In June 2021, the **Culture Sector Working Group (CSWG)** was established within the Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS) that operates under the Prime Minister's Office as a platform to support the development, implementation, monitoring and upgrading of the culture sector strategy in Palestine, aiming at strengthening the sector through policy dialogue and information sharing between relevant stakeholders to achieve the goals and milestones set in the Ministry of Culture's sector strategy and the Palestinian National Policy Agenda 2020 – 2022. The CSWG is chaired by the Ministry of Culture (MoC), with Norway as Deputy Chair and UNESCO as technical advisor.

28. Despite the difficulties linked to the pandemic, several International Days have been celebrated in Palestine, such as the **World Olive Tree Day** on 26 November 2020 through a dedicated video with a particular focus on the intangible cultural heritage practices linked to the olive tree, or the **International Jazz Day** with a virtual concert featuring the TYPO band from Gaza on 30 April 2020, while in 2021 concerts of several groups were performed in the Old City of Jerusalem and in Bethlehem.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

29. The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) monitored and documented significant increase in the number of violations against media freedoms in Palestine during the first half of 2021, compared to the number of violations in the first half of 2020⁴. The number of violations committed against media freedoms during the first half of 2021 reached a total of **384 violations**, compared to a total of 237 violations documented during the first half of 2020. This represents an increase of 147 violations, or 62%, over the past year. In addition, in May 2021, IDF destroyed a tower block in Gaza that housed the offices of several local and international media outlets.

30. The UNESCO has continued raising awareness on **press freedom, journalists' safety and access to information**, including:

- In May 2021, the UNESCO Ramallah Office celebrated World Press Freedom Day, through a series of activities at the regional and national levels. A short video was produced casting journalists in the field, highlighting the challenges they face in their work, with a special attention to women journalists. The video was widely published on social media.
- In December 2020, UNESCO Ramallah Office organized a high-level webinar titled “Freedom of expression online and offline / Press Freedom / Human Rights Defenders” jointly with the Netherlands Representative Office, the Sweden Representative Office and OHCHR to commemorate Human Rights Day / World Press Freedom Conference 2020. The webinar opened space for discussion and the sharing of experiences among national counterparts. As a follow-up to the webinar, collaborations are being explored to further support human rights and in particular the rights of journalists.
- UNESCO organized a one-day discussion commemorating the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) entitled “The Palestinian reality and International Comparisons of Freedom and Violations Against Journalists”, providing an opportunity to exchange perspectives on domestic and international laws and treaties regarding freedom of expression, including online, and the safety of journalists. The event was attended by journalists, activists, academics, and media representatives.
- In celebration of the ITU–UNESCO Regional Digital Inclusion Week for Arab States “Serving the underserved in times of crisis: No one left behind” in October 2020, UNESCO and the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology of Palestine held a ceremony at a school in Jericho. An Internet connection was established at the school and a donation of equipment was made to enrich the school’s computer lab in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

31. Throughout October 2020, UNESCO Ramallah held specialized training sessions introducing the **Arabic version of UNESCO’s handbook on “Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training”**. The online training provided journalists and educators with tools to deal with disinformation, in particular in relation to the COVID-19 “disinfodemic”. Public awareness materials were produced, including a handbook for reporters in high-risk environments.

32. Following the recent escalation in May 2021, UNESCO Ramallah Office distributed **15 sets of safety gear** for journalists, while also facilitating **psychological and wellbeing support** in coordination with the organization Filastiniyat benefitting 150 journalists (105 women and 45 men) and 60 youth

⁴ The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms semi-annual report 2021: [https://www.madacenter.org/files/Semi%20annual%201-2021%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.madacenter.org/files/Semi%20annual%201-2021%20(1).pdf)

activists (30 women and 30 men). This activity was financed through the Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP). A manual is also being developed that will serve at national level as a resource for Palestinian journalists, as well as a reference at the regional level.

33. UNESCO Ramallah Office conducted, in collaboration with the Palestinian Syndicate of Journalists and the Palestinian Observatory for Verification and Media Information Literacy (Kashif), a two-day training session on “Professional and psychological safety of journalists” in August 2021. UNESCO launched in 2021 a study of the structural framework for media pluralism in Palestine using the recommendations from the 2014 comprehensive study of Palestine’s media landscape based on UNESCO’s Media Development Indicators as a benchmark, with a focus on small- and medium-sized outlets, including community media. The study results are expected to be finalized by the end of 2021. An assessment of the safety of journalists in Palestine based on UNESCO’s **Journalists’ Safety Indicators** was launched on 6 September 2021. The assessment is expected to generate baseline information against which progress in the implementation in Palestine of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity can be assessed over time.

34. UNESCO Ramallah Office finalized the first **National Policy Background Document on Media and Information Literacy** that was launched in 2020. The Policy document will pave the way for a National MIL Strategy in Palestine, based on the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Policy Guidelines and the model MIL Curriculum. The policy paper was developed while considering the local realities in the country and reflecting on the government’s response to COVID-19. The document was presented and discussed with various stakeholders over the summer of 2020 in cooperation with the Education unit in UNESCO Ramallah. This has resulted in the forming in 2021 of a new Thematic Working Group on MIL by the Ministry of Education that UNESCO is co-chairing.

35. In partnership with the Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation (PYALARA), UNESCO Ramallah Office concluded the activities of the **Media and Information Literacy** Project launched in October 2020, with a ceremony and a short film competition, in which three universities – Birzeit University, the American University in Jenin, and Al-Quds Open University in Gaza all received awards.

36. Under the IPDC/ICESCO-funded project “**Enhancing Media Research Field in Media Faculties**”, the Al-Quds Open University established a research center, in close collaboration with other universities in the West Bank and Gaza. This research center is a platform that provides opportunities for collaborative work and learning in areas including digital storytelling, financial reporting, data journalism, videography and media and information literacy. With funding from the IPDC, Al-Quds Open University will launch in fall 2021 a project “**Assessing Media Institutions Strategic Management and Extending Media Literacy in the Palestinian Higher Education**” aiming at developing a MIL curriculum in collaboration with other Palestinian Universities.

37. UNESCO Ramallah also continues to support the preparation of the first national report of **UNESCO’s Internet Universality Indicators** that aims to assess the state of Internet development at the national level, according to the ROAM principles of Human Rights, Openness, Accessibility, Multi-stakeholder participation. The report, which is being prepared in collaboration with the Arab Center for Social Media Advancement (Hamleh), is expected to be issued at the end of 2021.

GENDER

38. UNESCO continued to support and promote 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.

39. In partnership with the UN-Women and Radio Philistia, and to celebrate the **International Women Day (IWD) 2020, two radio episodes were broadcasted live, on the role of women in the media, with the participation of a group of female journalists, and the second on the media, society and useful information.** The episodes created an open platform to share and exchange experience, shedding light on the journalistic reality in Palestine, and the challenges faced by female journalists. This has resulted into a more sustained collaboration with UN-Women that materialized through the signing of a cooperation agreement to reinforced work on Media and Gender.

40. In November 2020, UNESCO organized a TV debate on “Family protection Bill” in collaboration with Save the Children on the occasion of the **16 Days of Activism Campaign** with the participation of a Representative from the Ministry of Social Development and a Lawyer on Gender issues.

41. UNESCO Ramallah Office marked the **International Women’s Day (IWD)** in March 2021 in close coordination with UN-Women and Palestine’s only Female-led radio station, Nisaa FM (Women FM) with a series of activities that spanned across an entire week. The activities varied between radio segments featuring successful women in different fields, radio awareness spots which were announced 4 times a day, “Vox Pops” which aired during peak hours and solicited 80 university students and young people for their opinions, leading to the highlight of the celebration: a debate episode. UNESCO Ramallah Office also led a debate, the fourth of the series of ResiliArt Debates, that shed light on the challenges facing women artists during COVID-19.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

42. UNESCO is actively participating in the UN Thematic Group on Youth (UNTG) and has undertaken several mapping exercises carried out in order to identify the best opportunity to build synergies and expand collaboration in support to youth related interventions in the following key areas such as “Support civic engagement initiatives that provide youth (in particular women and girls) with a great voice (i.e. Elections)” as well as “Economic empowerment”.

43. UNESCO as a member of the UNTG on Youth has contributed to the first **Youth Advisory Panel (YAP)** in Palestine. The YAP is expected to provide a platform for young people to advise and impact policy, programme design, and implementation of youth-related interventions in the country and to ensure that the United Nations programme interventions effectively respond to the critical challenges and priorities of youth. The selection the future members of the panel will be finalized by October 2021.

44. Furthermore, UNESCO Ramallah Office celebrated the **International Youth Day (IYD) 2020 and 2021**. While in 2020, it has organized online debate to engage youth on two topics in the fields of education and culture in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021, thanks to funding support from UNESCO-Beirut, it organized an event in the village of Battir, a UNESCO world heritage site; the event aimed at engaging the youth in learning about traditional agriculture and promoting sustainable food culture in Palestine. A video was also developed to raise awareness with the wider community about the **importance of traditional agricultural techniques in preserving the Palestinian cultural heritage whilst also producing food in ways that respect the environment**. 30 young volunteers (16 females and 14 males between the age of 17 and 29) from the West Bank and East Jerusalem participated in the event at the end of July 2021 by harvesting the local fruits and vegetables and learned about the agricultural heritage of the region.

45. As part of the celebration of the 2021 International Youth Day, UNESCO Ramallah Office together with several United Nations agencies (FAO, WFP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP), the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Empowerment came together in a virtual youth dialogue held on 17 of August 2021 on innovative and environmentally friendly projects in the field of food systems.

46. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO is strengthening its efforts to engage with youth, to benefit from youth-led solutions and to help Member States address youth challenges. UNESCO is currently delivering the Youth as researchers (YAR) global initiative on COVID-19. Two regional research teams are looking at the impact of COVID-19 in the Arab States that are expected to provide useful insights from youth in the region. One young Palestinian is part of one of the teams. Findings was presented during the Knowledge-Sharing Meeting in October 2021, the first global event to showcase and debate findings and data on the pandemic that have been generated by youth, with youth, and for youth.

PART II – THE SITUATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

47. 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.

Proposed draft resolution

48. In light of the above, the General Conference may wish to adopt a resolution along the following lines:

The General Conference,

Recalling 40 C/Resolution 67, 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 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and the Hague Convention (1954) and its Additional Protocols,

Having examined document 41 C/17,

Also recalling the role that UNESCO is called upon to act in order to help fulfill the right to education for all, and to meet the need for Palestinians to have safe access to the education system,

Committed to the protection and the safeguarding of monuments, works of art, manuscripts, books and other historical and cultural properties to be protected in the event of conflicts,

1. *Supports* the efforts made by the Director-General with a view to the implementation of 40 C/Resolution 67, and *requests* her to do everything possible to ensure that it is fully implemented in the framework of the Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41 C/5);
2. *Expresses its appreciation* for the substantial contributions of all concerned Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to UNESCO's action in the occupied Palestinian territory, and *appeals* to them to continue assisting UNESCO in this endeavour;
3. *Thanks* the Director-General for the results that have been obtained in relation to the implementation of a number of current educational and cultural activities, and *invites* her to strengthen UNESCO's financial and technical assistance to the Palestinian educational and cultural institutions in order to address new needs and problems resulting from recent developments;

4. *Also thanks* the Director-General for UNESCO's response to the situation in the Gaza Strip and for the initiatives that have already been implemented with the generous financial support of Member States and donors, and *calls upon* the Director-General to further expand the early recovery programme, within the Organization's fields of competence;
5. *Expresses* its continuing concern at any actions undermining the cultural and natural heritage, and cultural and educational institutions, as well as at any impediments which prevent Palestinian and all other schoolchildren and students from being an integral part of their social fabric and from exercising fully their right to education, and *calls* for the observance of the provisions of the present resolution;
6. *Encourages* the Director-General to continue to reinforce her action in favour of the reconstruction, rehabilitation and restoration of the Palestinian archaeological sites and cultural heritage;
7. *Encourages* the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, and *expresses the hope* that the Arab Israeli peace negotiations will succeed, and that a just and comprehensive peace will be brought about speedily, in accordance with the Constitution of UNESCO and the United Nations resolutions on this matter, particularly the relevant Security Council resolutions;
8. *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 this resolution;
 - (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;
9. *Recalls* that this item is inscribed on the agenda of the 214th session of the Executive Board, and *decides* to include this item in the agenda of the 42nd session of the General Conference.