



SRMUN ATLANTA 2023
November 16 - 18, 2023
UNESCO_atlanta@srmun.org

Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Atlanta 2023 and the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). My name is Charles Lenoir, and I have the pleasure of serving as your Director for UNESCO. This will be my second time as a SRMUN Atlanta staff member, having previously served as the Assistant Director of the League of Arab States, I also attended SRMUN Atlanta four times as a delegate. I am a recent graduate with a BA in Political Science and a BA in Anthropology. Our committee's Assistant Director will be Joanne Kim. This will be Joanne's first time as a staff member. Joanne has attended four SRMUN Atlanta conferences since 2018. Joanne is currently a Junior, studying Political Science with a minor in Public Relations.

The mission of UNESCO is to foster peace, environmentalism, education, and culture across borders through the use of international collaboration. With 193 Member States, UNESCO applies these principles by promoting programs such as environmental science initiatives, creating sustainable communication networks, and preservation efforts for culture worldwide.

Focusing on the mission of UNESCO, we have developed the following topics for the delegates to discuss come conference:

- I. Protecting Education Systems within Conflict Regions.
- II. Developing International Collaborative Systems to Mitigate the Destruction of World Heritage Sites

This background guide will serve as the foundation for your research, yet it should not be the extent of the research. Preparation is given to each topic to help guide delegates in their initial research, and to serve as a starting place for more in-depth studies. It is expected that delegates go beyond this background guide in preparation for their position paper and to better prepare themselves for contribution within the committee in November. Further, each delegation is required to submit a position paper for consideration. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, October 27th, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards.**

Both Joanne and I are excited for the opportunity to serve as your dais for UNESCO. I wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to meeting and working with each of you. Should questions arise as you begin to prepare for this conference, contacting your dais is always encouraged.

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Committee History for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency under the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).¹ Prior to the UNESCO's founding, European Member States met in the United Kingdom for the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) in 1942 to find ways to rebuild their education systems after the war.² The mission of CAME gathered the support and attention of international states, such as the United States.³ UNESCO was established and founded by 37 Member States following CAME.⁴ The first General Conference of UNESCO was held in Paris from November 19, 1946 to December 10, 1946.⁵ Prior to 1945, work in the realm of education and culture was under the scope of organizations such as the International Bureau of Education (IBE).⁶ The work of the IBE was incorporated into UNESCO in 1968.⁷ The organization's constitution was founded on November 16, 1945 in London, England; however, it was not ratified until November 4, 1946 as 20 Member States were signatories for ratification of the constitution.⁸ The Hotel Majestic in Paris was UNESCO's home from 1946 until 1958.⁹ In 1958, UNESCO moved to its present headquarters, the Place de Fontenoy in Paris, France.¹⁰ As UNESCO is working towards the fulfillment of its mandate, the committee has produced many substantial documents which have scoped not only its history but also created a clear path of work in the future.¹¹ From October 17, 1972 to November 21, 1972, the General Conference of UNESCO met for the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and in 1976 the world heritage committee was established, and the first sites were inscribed on the world heritage list in 1978.¹²

Since the inaugural meeting, the General Conference meets biennially to determine the policies and main lines of work of the Organization and is attended by representatives of Member States, Associate Members, observers, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).¹³ UNESCO has 193 Member States and 12 associate members who are allowed to vote in the General Conference.¹⁴ Each Member State of the General Conference receives one vote in session, and most decisions pass with a majority vote unless stipulated by the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference.¹⁵ The General Conference elects a new Director-General every four years who does not hold a vote in the Conference but governs the Secretariat.¹⁶ The present

¹ "About UN; Structure: System Chart," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/un_system_chart.pdf, (accessed April 16, 2023).

² "About Us; The Organization's History," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/brief>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

³ "About Us; The Organization's History," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

⁴ "About Us; The Organization's History," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

⁵ "(Records of the) General Conference, first session, held at UNESCO House, Paris from 20 November to 10 December 1946 (including Resolutions)," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000114580.locale=en>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

⁶ "About Us; The Organization's History," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

⁷ "About Us; The Organization's History," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

⁸ "About Us; The Organization's History," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

⁹ "UNESCO," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/resource/12/1?hub=468>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

¹⁰ "About Us: History: Paris Headquarters," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/house#:~:text=The%20Place%20de%20Fontenoy%20in,on%20the%20Place%20de%20Fontenoy>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

¹¹ "About Us; History of UNESCO," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

¹² "UNESCO at a glance," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, pg. 36, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000188700.locale=en>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

¹³ "General Conference," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/general-conference>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

¹⁴ "Member States," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/countries>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

¹⁵ "Rules of Procedure of the General Conference," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/rules-procedure-gc>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

¹⁶ "Frequently Asked Questions about the General Conference," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000184147>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

Director-General of UNESCO, elected in 2017 and re-elected in 2021, is Ms. Audrey Azoulay of France.¹⁷ The General Conference is UNESCO's primary decision-making body, composed of representatives from all Member States.¹⁸ UNESCO's regular two-year budget is approved by the General Conference.¹⁹ However, the budget is mainly financed by Member States through assessed contributions.²⁰ The regular adjusted budget for 2022 and 2023 is USD 1.5 Billion.²¹ UNESCO also benefits from substantial extra-budgetary funding from different Member States and various multilateral institutions like the UN and private sectors to strengthen its programs, especially in the field, and to increase its outreach activities.²² Some 414 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) maintain official relations with UNESCO and hundreds more work with the organization on various projects whether that is working to protect press freedom (i.e. Committee to Protect Journalists) or supporting education in certain regions like Africa Network Campaign on Education for All.²³

Currently, there are about 53 regional offices staffed by about 2,217 people and 1,154 World Heritage Sites that are part of UNESCO around the world.²⁴ Some roles of the regional offices are to coordinate the work of UNESCO within their region while providing administrative support.²⁵ There are currently 21 national field offices, 12 cluster field offices, and 13 regional field offices across the world.²⁶ The responsibilities of these offices are to help ensure positive interaction between Member States, with other UN agencies and Secretariat units, and between sectors and disciplines.²⁷

The Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (DRRP) was adopted in 1978 to reiterate the sacredness of human rights.²⁸ Article 1, sub-clause 1 of the DRRP states that, "All human beings belong to a single species and are descended from a common stock... They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity."²⁹ Reaffirming and expanding on the DRRP, the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights was adopted in 1997.³⁰ The expansion and reaffirmation of the DRRP helped lead to the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning declaring that cloning stands in contradiction to preserving human rights in 1998.³¹ In 1992, the Memory of the World Programme was created to protect irreplaceable library and archive collections and, as of 1997, includes sound, film, and television archives.³² One of the most recent landmark

¹⁷ "Audrey Azoulay re-elected at the head of UNESCO with massive support," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/audrey-azoulay-re-elected-head-unesco-massive-support>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

¹⁸ "Frequently Asked Questions about the General Conference," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000184147>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

¹⁹ "Frequently Asked Questions about the General Conference," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

²⁰ "Budget and Strategy," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/budget-strategy>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

²¹ "Budget and Strategy," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

²² "Budget and Strategy" United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

²³ "NGOs and Foundations," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/member-states/ngos-and-foundations>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

²⁴ "History of UNESCO," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/history>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

²⁵ "UNESCO Field Offices, Institutes, and Centres," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, <https://atom.archives.unesco.org/unesco-field-offices-institutes-and-centres>, (accessed February 12, 2023).

²⁶ "About Us: Where We Are: Field offices," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

²⁷ "About Us: Where We Are: Field offices," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

²⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Universal Instrument; Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice," November 27, 1978, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-race-and-racial-prejudice>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

²⁹ "Universal Instrument; Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice" United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

³⁰ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights," November 11, 1997, <https://www.unesco.org/en/ethics-science-technology/human-genome-and-human-rights>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

³¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights."

³² "UNESCO," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, pg. 37 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001887/188700e.pdf>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

documents of UNESCO was established in 2001 when the committee adopted the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.³³ The purpose of the General Conference is to be “Committed to the full implementation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...”³⁴ This document reaffirms that all individuals have equal human dignity and human rights as stated in the Constitution.³⁵ In 2003, the General Conference adopted the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage which allows for the respect, awareness, and preservation of intangible aspects of a culture.³⁶ UNESCO’s range of adopted documents all echo the beliefs expressed by the founders of the constitution and current members of the organization when it comes to global issues like human rights and cultural diversity.³⁷

UNESCO has a strong focus on several overarching objectives that they work towards including but not limited to: attaining quality education for all, fostering cultural diversity, and intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace.³⁸ A few key topics are protecting tangible (such as world heritage sites) and intangible heritage (such as language and diversity), responding to post-conflict and post-crisis situations, and empowering the youth.³⁹ These topics all align with UNESCO’s mission as well as the eight Millennium Development Goals established by A/RES/55/2.⁴⁰ With the challenges faced in recent years during the I-19 pandemic, UNESCO has reaffirmed its commitment to its two global priorities which are gender equality and Africa.⁴¹ However, UNESCO has also launched initiatives such as the Global Education Coalition and “The Next Normal” campaign as a response to the impacts of I-19.⁴²

³³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity,” November 2, 2001, <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/unesco-universal-declaration-cultural-diversity>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

³⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.”

³⁵ General Assembly resolution 217 A, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, United Nations, (December 10, 1948), <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

³⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, (October 17, 2003), <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>.

³⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity,” November 2, 2001, <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/unesco-universal-declaration-cultural-diversity>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

³⁸ “UNESCO at a glance,” United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, pg.4, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001887/188700e.pdf>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

³⁹ “UNESCO at a glance” United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Pg.4.

⁴⁰ “UN Documentation: Development 2000-2015, Millennium Development Goals,” United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Library, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/dev/2000-2015#:~:text=The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20set,gender%20equality%20and%20empower%20women>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

⁴¹ “Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4),” United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, pg.12, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378083.locale=en>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

⁴² “COVID-19 Recovery,” United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/covid-19#:~:text=UNESCO%2C%20from%20the%20onset%20of,the%20impact%20of%20COVID%2D19>, (accessed April 16, 2023).

I. Protecting Education Systems within Conflict Regions

Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported economic, physical, and societal barriers are preventing around 244 million children from accessing education in 2022.¹ Education is, for many, a way to escape a cycle of poverty through equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.² Conflict regions endanger an individual's right for an opportunity to a sustainable, equitable, and safe education.³ Youth and children specifically suffer. According to a United Nations (UN) report, the number of youth and children that lost access to education due to conflict is around 222 million as of 2022.⁴ As a result, Secretary-General António Guterres calls for a focus in 2022 on addressing protections around educational institutions in conflict regions during his remarks at the Transforming Education Summit.⁵ UNESCO has reaffirmed commitments to protecting educational institutions in conflict regions, working towards meeting various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG 4, Quality Education.⁶

History

World War II forced Member States to contend with the issue of continued education during emergencies.⁷ Education suffered for some Member States due to various reasons such as evacuations, schools being used as bombing targets, and a loss of teachers due to the war.⁸ As a result, many students were not able to meet the basic numeracy and literacy requirements.⁹ However, women faced an increase in educational opportunities due to men leaving to fight in the war in some Member States.¹⁰ The negative impacts of World War II on education led to the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) in 1942 as a way to navigate rebuilding education systems after World War II.¹¹ Since its establishment in 1945, UNESCO's directive has been building peace and prosperity through international cooperation focusing on education, science, culture, and communications.¹²

The earliest UN document supporting the right to education is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), introduced by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948.¹³ The UDHR states education is a fundamental

¹ "UNESCO Chief Calls for Transforming Education, with 244 Million Still Out of School," *United Nations News*, September 1, 2022, [https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1125952#:~:text=The%20bell%20is%20ringing%20for,and%20Cultural%20Organization%20\(UNESCO\)](https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1125952#:~:text=The%20bell%20is%20ringing%20for,and%20Cultural%20Organization%20(UNESCO),), (accessed May 21, 2023).

² "Millions Could Escape Poverty by Finishing Secondary Education, says UN Cultural Agency," *United Nations News*, June 22, 2017, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/06/millions-could-escape-poverty-by-finishing-secondary-education-says-un-cultural-agency/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

³ Patricia Justino, *Education for All. The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education*, UNESCO, 2010, pg. 4-10, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000190710>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁴ "222 Million Crisis-Hit Children Currently Require Educational Support," *United Nations News*, June 21, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/06/1120922>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁵ "Secretary-General, at Transforming Education Summit, Urges Greater Commitment to Make Schools Safe, Support Lifelong Learning, Increase Resources for Students," *United Nations News*, September 19, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21463.doc.htm>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁶ "UNESCO Chief Calls for Transforming Education, with 244 Million Still Out of School," *United Nations News*.

⁷ "About Us; The Organization's History," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/brief>, (accessed July 16, 2023).

⁸ "How Children's Lives Changed During the Second World War," *Imperial War Museums*, 2023, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/how-childrens-lives-changed-during-the-second-world-war>, (accessed July 4, 2023).

⁹ "How Children's Lives Changed During the Second World War," *Imperial War Museums*.

¹⁰ Matthew Lynch, "Uncovering the Devastating Impact of World War II on American Education," *The Advocate*, September 2, 2016, <https://www.theadvocate.org/uncovering-devastating-impact-world-war-ii-american-education/>, (accessed July 4, 2023).

¹¹ "About Us; The Organization's History," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, <https://www.unesco.org/en/brief>, (accessed July 4, 2023).

¹² "History of UNESCO," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

¹³ United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, A/RES/217 (III) (December 10, 1948, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>).

human right, which was later described by the Convention against Discrimination in Education.¹⁴ Adopted in 1960, the Convention is UNESCO's first legally-binding instrument dedicated to the right of education on the international scale.¹⁵ The Convention lists a variety of provisions, ranging from free and mandatory primary education to quality teaching and supplies for educators.¹⁶ UNESCO holds Member States accountable through various means including an online observatory that allows for UNESCO to track implementation of the right to education, known as the Global Education Monitoring Report.¹⁷ The Global Education Monitoring Report was established in 2002 as an editorially independent report supported by UNESCO.¹⁸ More importantly, the Global Education Monitoring Report also monitors education in conflict affected areas as they've released a report titled "The hidden crisis: armed conflict in education".¹⁹ However, the Global Education Monitoring Report received mandates from 160 Member States to monitor and report progress on education at the 2015 World Education Forum.²⁰ Member States are held responsible for abiding by the Convention through legal measures as they have ratified at least one treaty or convention covering the right to education.²¹

Despite previous efforts to address education in conflict zones ranging from dropout rates to attacks on schools, there were approximately 12,700 attacks on schools in 41 Member States from 2012 to 2017.²² Educational institutions provide many foundational benefits to youth and children throughout all Member States.²³ Schools provide a sense of normalcy for children through a safe space to learn and develop.²⁴ Education has the potential to decrease a child's vulnerability to extremist organizations due to a sense of inclusivity within a social setting.²⁵ However, conflict does possess the ability to negatively impact education and the well-being of individuals.²⁶ First, girls in conflict-affected areas are over twice as likely to be unenrolled in school compared to those who are not in conflict-affected areas.²⁷ As a result of not being enrolled in school, the lack of school enrollment increases the likelihood of child marriage and early childbearing, which has the potential to negatively impact a girl's physical and mental health.²⁸ Second, organizations that resort to violent extremism are more likely to target those who have limited formal education due to a lack of knowledge compared to those who have obtained a higher level of

¹⁴ "What You Need to Know About the Right to Education," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*, April 21, 2022, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/what-you-need-know-about-right-education>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

¹⁵ "Convention Against Discrimination in Education," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*, February 2, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/right-education/convention-against-discrimination>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

¹⁶ "What You Need to Know About the Right to Education," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*.

¹⁷ "About Global Education Monitoring Report," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/about>, (accessed July 4, 2023).

¹⁸ "About Global Education Monitoring Report," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*.

¹⁹ "About Global Education Monitoring Report," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*.

²⁰ "About Global Education Monitoring Report," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*.

²¹ "What You Need to Know About the Right to Education," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*.

²² "21,000 Students and Teachers Harmed in Attacks on Schools Around the World," *Their World*, May 11, 2018, <https://theirworld.org/news/thousands-children-teachers-harmed-in-attacks-on-schools-around-world/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

²³ Halimatou Hima, "Schooling isn't Enough: The Urgency of Quality Education for Children Forcibly on the Move in the Sahel," *Brookings Institute*, September 9, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2022/09/09/schooling-isnt-enough-the-urgency-of-quality-education-for-children-forcibly-on-the-move-in-the-sahel/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

²⁴ Halimatou Hima, "Schooling isn't Enough: The Urgency of Quality Education for Children Forcibly on the Move in the Sahel."

²⁵ Halimatou Hima, "Schooling isn't Enough: The Urgency of Quality Education for Children Forcibly on the Move in the Sahel."

²⁶ Halimatou Hima, "Schooling isn't Enough: The Urgency of Quality Education for Children Forcibly on the Move in the Sahel."

²⁷ Halimatou Hima, "Schooling isn't Enough: The Urgency of Quality Education for Children Forcibly on the Move in the Sahel."

²⁸ Quentin Wodon, et al., "Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls," *Global Partnership*, July 2018, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2018-07-gpe-high-cost-of-not-educating-girls.pdf>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

education.²⁹ Third, many children and youth will not be able to learn essential skills and knowledge needed to contribute to their communities and economies.³⁰ These impacts drive organizations like UNESCO to work towards improving protections around education in conflict-affected areas.³¹

Current Situation

Between 2020 and 2021, approximately 5,096 attacks on educational institutions took place across 86 Member States or territories with approximately 9,225 students and teachers harmed.³² Most of the attacks targeted schools and other educational institutions.³³ As of 2023, there are about 78 million children and youth not in school due to displacement, natural disasters, and conflict in their region.³⁴ Also in 2023, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for more funding towards education in emergencies, including conflict zones.³⁵ There are various international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to ensure that children and youth are able to access alternative ways to education during conflict along with its protection, such as the Tides Center.³⁶ The Tides Center works to protect education through the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack.³⁷ The Tides Center has performed and reports research on conflict and education, promoting the Safe Schools Declaration and providing a toolkit that can be used to collect and analyze data regarding attacks on education.³⁸

Emerging technology has provided new and transformative ways for students to access education in conflict areas and other dangerous situations.³⁹ The COVID-19 pandemic increased the use of technology in education, as the pandemic drove school administrators to find alternative options from the physical classroom.⁴⁰ An increased investment in educational applications countered trends of access decreasing in crisis.⁴¹ Virtual experiences enhance learning to improve student-to-teacher and student-to-student interactions when it is dangerous to meet in-person.⁴² Furthermore, new technology such as artificial intelligence provides children affected by conflict zones to learn by playing educational games.⁴³ The Can't Wait to Learn initiative prioritizes motivation and wheel-spinning by identifying where a student is stuck in their minigames.⁴⁴ Technological devices such as laptops, cell-phones, and tablets have provided accessibility to education for both educators and students despite their current location is one example.⁴⁵ Social media applications have proven the ability to deliver educational content which addresses concerns of teacher and student absentee rates.⁴⁶ UNESCO Member States have begun a variety of projects utilizing

²⁹ "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement," *United Nations Development Programmes*, 2023, <https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/v2/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2023-english.pdf>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

³⁰ "Education Under Attack," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, March 30, 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/education-under-attack>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

³¹ "What you need to know about education in emergencies," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, March 14, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/emergencies/education/need-know>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

³² "Attacks on Education Dataset," *Tracks Attacks on Education Data Portal*, 2021, <https://tracedataportal.org/data/attacks-on-education-dataset/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

³³ "Attacks on Education Dataset," *Tracks Attacks on Education Data Portal*.

³⁴ "78 million children don't go to school at all, warns UN chief in call for action," *United Nations News*, February 16, 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/02/1133567>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

³⁵ "78 million children don't go to school at all, warns UN chief in call for action," *United Nations News*.

³⁶ "About Us," *Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack*, 2023, <https://protectingeducation.org/about-us/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

³⁷ "About Us," *Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack*.

³⁸ "What We Do," *Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack*, 2023, <https://protectingeducation.org/what-we-do/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

³⁹ Hoda Baytiyeh, "Social Media Tools for Educational Sustainability in Conflict-Affected Regions," *Education Sciences 11*, no. 662 (October 20, 2021): 2, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1320903.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Hoda Baytiyeh, "Social Media Tools for Educational Sustainability in Conflict-Affected Regions," pg 2.

⁴¹ Hoda Baytiyeh, "Social Media Tools for Educational Sustainability in Conflict-Affected Regions," pg 6.

⁴² Hoda Baytiyeh, "Social Media Tools for Educational Sustainability in Conflict-Affected Regions," pg 10.

⁴³ "Research: Artificial Intelligence to Help Learning in Conflict Zones," *War Child*, February 23, 2021, <https://www.warchildholland.org/news/artificial-intelligence-learning/>, (accessed July 4, 2023).

⁴⁴ Research: Artificial Intelligence to Help Learning in Conflict Zones," *War Child*.

⁴⁵ Hoda Baytiyeh, "Social Media Tools for Educational Sustainability in Conflict-Affected Regions," pg 2.

⁴⁶ Hoda Baytiyeh, "Social Media Tools for Educational Sustainability in Conflict-Affected Regions," pg 7.

digital technology for children and youth whose education has been disrupted by conflict, especially in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region.⁴⁷

Action Taken by the United Nations

UNESCO plays an active role in education promotion both as a response to an emergency and long-term recovery.⁴⁸ In 2007, UNESCO commissioned the Education Under Attack study, documenting the impacts armed conflicts had on education along with their usage of various educational institutions.⁴⁹ The study discusses the scale of the attacks along with some legal recommendations.⁵⁰ One recommendation was to allocate more resources for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to bring more cases of attacking educational institutions to trial as a deterrence.⁵¹

In 2014, UNESCO published the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, which emphasized the protection of education in conflicts through a state-led process.⁵² The Guidelines urges parties involved in armed conflict to not use schools and other educational institutions to support their efforts.⁵³ The Guidelines helped develop the 2015 Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines on Military Use which was open for endorsement at the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools.⁵⁴ The Declaration provides Member States with an opportunity to express political support to protecting education in conflict areas through a commitment to implementing these guidelines.⁵⁵ Also in 2015, several Member States signed the Education 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, used as a pathway to improve access to education and build a foundation for sustainable development and peace.⁵⁶

A strategic partner in protecting educational institutions during conflict has been the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).⁵⁷ With its mission focused on advocacy for youth and children, UNICEF partners with various organizations, including Education Cannot Wait, to accomplish their work towards providing education in conflict areas.⁵⁸ Education Cannot Wait is the UN's global fund used for education in emergencies and conflicts to bring both short-term and long-term solutions.⁵⁹ Building on a common goal to promote safe and sustainable education, UNICEF and UNESCO collaborate on initiatives such as paying respects to the two teachers and two students killed in an attack that took place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in October 2016.⁶⁰ The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted A/RES/74/275 (2020), establishing the International Day to Protect Education from Attack.⁶¹

⁴⁷ Hoda Baytiyeh, "Social Media Tools for Educational Sustainability in Conflict-Affected Regions," *Education Sciences* 11, no. 662 (October 20, 2021): 2, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1320903.pdf>, pg 4.

⁴⁸ "The Safe Schools Declaration is Now Endorsed by 51 States," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*, April 21, 2022, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/safe-schools-declaration-now-endorsed-51-states>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁴⁹ "Protecting Education from Attack," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, 2021, <https://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-attack#:~:text=To%20document%20these%20gross%20violations.concerted%20action%20to%20stop%20them>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁵⁰ "Protecting Education from Attack," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*.

⁵¹ Brendan O'Malley, "Education Under Attack," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, 2007: 62, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000186303>.

⁵² "Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines on Military Use," *Global Coalition to Protect Education Against Attack*, 2023, <https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/safe-schools-declaration-and-guidelines-on-military-use/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁵³ "Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines Protecting Schools and Universities Military Use," *International Committee of the Red Cross*, December 18, 2018, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/safe-schools-declaration-and-guidelines-protecting-schools-and-universities-military-use>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁵⁴ "Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines on Military Use," *Global Coalition to Protect Education Against Attack*.

⁵⁵ "Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines on Military Use," *Global Coalition to Protect Education Against Attack*.

⁵⁶ "Leading SDG 4- Education 2030," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/education2030-sdg4>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁵⁷ "Education," *United Nations Children's Fund*, 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/education>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁵⁸ "Education" *United Nations Children's Fund*.

⁵⁹ "Who We Are," *Education Cannot Wait*, 2023, <https://www.educationcannotwait.org>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁶⁰ "UNICEF and UNESCO: In memory of the teachers and students killed in Butembo," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, October 17, 2016. <https://protectingeducation.org/news/unicef-and-unesco-in-memory-of-the-teachers-and-students-killed-in-butembo/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁶¹ "International Day to Protect Education From Attack," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, September 9, 2020. <https://www.unesco.org/en/international-day-protect-education-attack>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

UNESCO and UNICEF co-facilitate the yearly observance of International Day to Protect Education from Attack.⁶² The focus of 2022's observance was on the need for action to protect education in conflict regions, such as strengthening prevention mechanisms and protecting vulnerable populations.⁶³ Previous observances have emphasized on safe, equitable, and quality education playing a role in fostering peace.⁶⁴

Recently, the UN Security Council (SC) has taken steps to promote the protection of educational institutions in conflict-affected areas.⁶⁵ In October 2021, the SC unanimously adopted S/RES/2601 (2021), condemning the attacks made towards educational institutions, educators, and students while urging parties involved in armed conflict to avoid attacking one's right to education.⁶⁶ The SC continues to emphasize the protection of educational institutions as it encourages Member States to assist the sustainability of education during conflict.⁶⁷ The SC pushes for accountability by calling various UN task forces on the Member State-level to increase and enhance surveillance and reporting regarding military use on schools.⁶⁸

UNESCO has collaborated with various donors, Member States, and NGOs, to implement various programs in conflict-affected areas.⁶⁹ For example, UNESCO worked with some of their partners to develop the Multi-Country Preparedness and Response Plan (MCPRP) addressing immediate and medium-term needs for education in Afghanistan and nearby Members.⁷⁰ UNESCO also has a platform to accomplish the 2030 agenda.⁷¹ The 2030 agenda lists out 17 Sustainable Development Goals for Member States to accomplish before 2030.⁷² UNESCO's platform, the Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Program provides educational and psychological support to children and youth impacted by the Syrian crisis.⁷³ UNESCO also works to provide timely and reliable data to help policymakers make well-informed decisions regarding education.⁷⁴ As of April 2022, UNESCO has reported 51 Member States have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration.⁷⁵

Conclusion

⁶² "International Day to Protect Education From Attack," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, September 9, 2020. <https://www.unesco.org/en/international-day-protect-education-attack>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁶³ "International Day to Protect Education From Attack 2022," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, September 9, 2022, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/international-day-protect-education-attack-2022#:~:text=On%20of%20September%2C%20UNESCO,for%20Children%20and%20Armed%20Conflict>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁶⁴ "International Day to Protect Education From Attack 2022," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*.

⁶⁵ "Security Council Strongly Condemns Attacks against Schools, Urges Safeguarding of Right to Education, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2601 (2021)," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, October 29, 2021. <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14680.doc.htm>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council resolution 2601, *The Protection of Education in Armed Conflict*, S/RES/2601, October 29, 2021, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-res-2601.php>.

⁶⁷ "Security Council Strongly Condemns Attacks against Schools, Urges Safeguarding of Right to Education, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2601 (2021)," *United Nations News*.

⁶⁸ "Security Council Strongly Condemns Attacks against Schools, Urges Safeguarding of Right to Education, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2601 (2021)," *United Nations News*.

⁶⁹ "What you need to know about education in emergencies," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, March 14, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/emergencies/education/need-know>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁷⁰ "Protecting Education in Afghanistan," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, May 11, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/emergencies/education/afghanistan>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁷¹ "A Second Chance at Education for Children in Syria," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, April 20, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/second-chance-education-children-syria>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁷² "The Sustainable Development Goals," *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>, (accessed July 17, 2023).

⁷³ "A Second Chance at Education for Children in Syria," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*.

⁷⁴ "What you need to know about education in emergencies," *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*.

⁷⁵ "The Safe Schools Declaration is Now Endorsed by 51 States," *United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization*, April 21, 2022, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/safe-schools-declaration-now-endorsed-51-states>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

The UN has called for a response from the international community to protect education within conflict-affected areas.⁷⁶ However, this issue is a multifaceted challenge that impacts one's access to equitable, safe, and quality education while finding continuous support.⁷⁷ Although UNESCO and other organizations within the UN have made progress towards this issue, there is still work that needs to be done, as the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNESCO signed an agreement in efforts to protect education in armed conflict through increased cooperation.⁷⁸ While protecting education has become an emerging priority for many, there are still disparities within access to education, especially during conflict.

Committee Directive

Delegates should discuss ways to provide and sustain alternative education for children who may have lost access to education due to conflict. Acknowledging that there are many non-governmental organizations and pre-existing initiatives, delegates should research the NGOs and partners nearest to them along with any potential concerns. In doing so, delegates should ask themselves: How can Members in UNESCO collaborate with the various non-governmental organizations and initiatives within the United Nations that work on alternative education? It is also important to understand the concerns that others have about the access and quality of alternative education. Therefore, it is important that delegates also ask: How can Member States sustainably address these concerns? If one were to consider the preventative aspects of protecting education, Delegates can also ask themselves: How can UNESCO work to protect access to education in conflict regions early on prior to the conflict escalating? Finally, delegates should consider this issue from multiple perspectives instead of a singular viewpoint, ranging from the financial aspects of the proposed solutions to the security concerns from conflict.

⁷⁶ United Nations, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Transforming Education Summit and the UNESCO Transforming Education Summit Secretariat. *Report on the 2022 Transforming Education Summit*. New York, NY: UN Headquarters, 2022.

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/report_on_the_2022_transforming_education_summit.pdf.

⁷⁷ "Seek to Ensure the Continuation of Education During Armed Conflict," *Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack*, <https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/implementation/seek-to-ensure-the-continuation-of-education-during-armed-conflict/>, (accessed May 21, 2023).

⁷⁸ "UN Children and Armed Conflict Office, UNESCO Sign Agreement to Strengthen Cooperation on Education for Children Living in Conflict Areas," *Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*, September 9, 2022, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2022/09/un-children-and-armed-conflict-office-unesco-sign-agreement-to-strengthen-cooperation-on-education-for-children-living-in-conflict-areas/>, (accessed April 18, 2023).

II. Developing International Collaborative Systems to Mitigate the Destruction of World Heritage Sites

Introduction

Since 1979, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has maintained a growing list of ‘in danger’ World Heritage Sites.¹ Identification of World Heritage Sites includes eligibility according to three distinct categories.² Cultural sites which have significant and aesthetic value, natural phenomena which provides insight into Earth’s geologic history, and sights with mixed features of both designations.³ According to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, for a site to be listed as “in danger,” the site must be added to “a list of the property appearing in the World Heritage List for the conservation of which major operations are necessary and for which assistance has been requested under this Convention.”⁴ As of 2023, 4.7 percent - or 55 of 1,157 - recognized World Heritage Sites are considered ‘in danger.’⁵ UNESCO recognizes the trend line for ‘in danger’ designation mitigation shows a net decline in progress, as the ‘in danger’ list sees consistent growth since inception in 1979.⁶ Systems and efforts must be enhanced as more sites have been listed as “in danger” than have been restored to the full list nearly every year since the first inclusion.⁷ There have been numerous theories and programs put forward for specific site preservation, especially for those affected by environmental issues, but there is not a formalized framework for the prevention and restoration required to maintain sites.⁸

History

UNESCO’s World Heritage program was launched in 1959 as an initiative to protect historic sites in Egypt and Sudan, which were in danger of flooding due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam.⁹ Flooding threatened the historic region of Nubia, part of which lies within Egypt.¹⁰ The Aswan High Dam construction took place in southeast Egypt in the city of Aswan to control the flooding of the Nile in the north, which threatened the Member State’s agriculture.¹¹ While the construction of this dam would be very economically beneficial to Egypt, the rising waters of the newly created artificial Lake Nasser behind the dam would threaten numerous historic sites in South Egypt and Northern Sudan.¹² Following the realization of this problem, the Egyptian and Sudanese government requested aid from UNESCO to protect or relocate the sites away from the dam.¹³

Beginning in 1960, following government petitions from Egypt and Sudan, UNESCO sent an appeal to Member States for what would be known as “The International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia.”¹⁴ The first large-scale preservation initiative by UNESCO began following this appeal.¹⁵ The preservation consisted of the

¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, France, November 16, 1972, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

² “World Heritage List,” UNESCO, 2023, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>, (accessed May 20, 2023).

³ “World Heritage List,” UNESCO.

⁴ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.

⁵ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.

⁶ “List of World Heritage in Danger,” UNESCO, 2023, (accessed June 12, 2023); “World Heritage List,” UNESCO, 2023, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>, (accessed June 12, 2023).

⁷ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.

⁸ “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” UNESCO.

⁹ “Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time,” UNESCO, 1980, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000074755>, (accessed May 20, 2023).

¹⁰ “Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae,” Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiques, 2019, <https://egy monuments.gov.eg/world-heritage/nubian-monuments-from-abu-simbel-to-philae/>, (accessed May 20, 2023).

¹¹ “Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time,” UNESCO.

¹² “Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time,” UNESCO.

¹³ “Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time,” UNESCO.

¹⁴ “Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time,” UNESCO.

¹⁵ “Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time,” UNESCO.

recovery of thousands of artifacts, excavation of hundreds of sites, and relocation of temple complexes to higher ground.¹⁶ Overall, the effort to preserve the Nubia historic sites was seen as a massive success, saving countless irreplaceable cultural artifacts from destruction.¹⁷ The coalition of 50 Member States coming together through UNESCO would form the foundation of the World Heritage Convention.¹⁸ This convention would allow for the cataloguing and administration of World Heritage Sites, which would become the World Heritage List as more and more sites were included annually.¹⁹

Following the success of the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, UNESCO began its considerations of a dedicated program for the record-keeping and preservation of heritage sites worldwide.²⁰ This program was finalized as the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which laid out the program as an official function of UNESCO and created the list of World Heritage Sites.²¹ The first set of sites to be recognized as World Heritage Sites were officially dedicated in 1978 with the Galápagos Islands in Ecuador, Ethiopia's Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, and Yellowstone National Park in the United States, along with 9 other sites.²² The 1979 list was adopted the following year, including the sites saved from the Aswan High Dam construction listed as the "Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae."²³

The first official designation of a world heritage site as "in danger" followed shortly in 1979.²⁴ An earthquake affecting Montenegro's Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor – notable for its large stonework walls and cathedrals – damaged the site to the point of necessitating UNESCO's aid in its renewal in collaboration with national and local governments.²⁵ Renewal efforts following the earthquake included proposals for the establishment of special protective zones, and integration of existing programs into broader regional municipalities.²⁶ The site would remain on the "in danger" list until renovation efforts were seen as sufficient, by the World Heritage Committee leading to the site's reinstatement to the full list in 2003.²⁷

Current Situation

The list of heritage sites continues to grow every year since its founding.²⁸ The first site to be removed from the list came in 2007 when Oman's Arabian Oryx Sanctuary became the first site to be delisted.²⁹ The government of Oman reduced the size of the site by 90 percent following the discovery of oil under the property.³⁰ This compromise of the integrity of the site was combined with a sharp decline in the population of native Arabian Oryx, due to poaching, which collectively led to consideration of the site's integrity by UNESCO.³¹ These factors compromised the site's

¹⁶ "Monuments of Nubia-International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia" UNESCO <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/172/>, (accessed May 20, 2023).

¹⁷ "Monuments of Nubia-International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia," UNESCO.

¹⁸ "Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time", UNESCO, 1980, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000074755>, (accessed May 20, 2023).

¹⁹ "Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time," UNESCO.

²⁰ "Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time," UNESCO.

²¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, France, November 16, 1972, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

²² "World Heritage List," UNESCO, 2023, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>, (accessed May 20, 2023).

²³ "World Heritage List," UNESCO.

²⁴ "Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor – UNESCO World Heritage Centre," UNESCO, 2015, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/125>, (accessed May 11, 2023).

²⁵ "Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor – UNESCO World Heritage Centre," UNESCO, 2015, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/125>, (accessed May 11, 2023).

²⁶ "Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor (Montenegro) (C 125)," InformMEA, June 15 ,2014, <https://www.informea.org/en/decision/natural-and-culturo-historical-region-kotor-montenegro-c-125-2>, (accessed May 11, 2023).

²⁷ "Decision 27 COM 8B.3 Properties removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger," UNESCO, 2003, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/695>.

²⁸ "Decision 27 COM 8B.3 Properties removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger," UNESCO.

²⁹ "Arabian Oryx Sanctuary - UNESCO World Heritage Centre," UNESCO, 2007, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/654>, (accessed May 5, 2023).

³⁰ "Arabian Oryx Sanctuary - UNESCO World Heritage Centre," UNESCO.

³¹ "Arabian Oryx Sanctuary - UNESCO World Heritage Centre," UNESCO.

value as a unique piece of natural history, and the site was subsequently removed from the list of World Heritage Sites due to the poaching and land loss.³²

World Heritage sites listed as “in danger” has seen growth in compromised sites consistently, as 2016 and 2023 are the two years with the highest number of endangered sites at 55.³³ A notable cause of the increase in “in danger” sites has been the rise of climate change and environment-related danger to sites, especially those classified as natural sites.³⁴ Demonstrating this impact, Everglades National Park in Florida, United States experiences significant changes in biodiversity and the ecosystem of the site.³⁵ The diversion of incoming water into the site has significantly damaged the notable flora and fauna present at the site, which was the main criteria for original inclusion, as well as an influx of invasive species which have disrupted the ecosystem of the site greatly.³⁶ The site is also home to over 200 pre-colonial archaeological sites, which could face destruction.³⁷ There is also consideration for the destructive impact that climate change has had, as hurricanes affecting the region have seen increases both in severity and frequency.³⁸ This increase in environmental risk has already shown to affect ten percent of the Everglades site during periods of severe weather.³⁹ This site is one of many worldwide which are not only being affected by direct human interference, but by the changing conditions of the world more broadly.⁴⁰

There are numerous causes behind the endangerment of World Heritage Sites.⁴¹ Conflict in the area of a site can lead to destruction of the notable features of the site, as the conflict may both damage the site and prevent the maintenance required to ensure the site’s integrity.⁴² While perpetrating the destruction and looting of artifacts, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militia also either destroyed or massively damaged dozens of historic sites and buildings in the conflict zone.⁴³ This conflict was met with condemnation and calls for international aid to mitigate further damage to sites.⁴⁴ Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office and Chair of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee said of the destruction: “Every state is responsible for protecting its own cultural objects. But protection of cultural property does not stop there. If a state is not able to fulfil this responsibility on its own, the entire international community has a duty to act, particularly in crisis situations and armed conflicts.”⁴⁵ The UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage lays out a framework for the implementation and collection of international aid along these lines.⁴⁶

³² “Decision 31 COM 7B.11 State of conservation of World Heritage properties - Arabian Oryx Sanctuary,” UNESCO, 2007, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1392>.

³³ “World Heritage List,” UNESCO, 2023, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>, (accessed May 20, 2023).

³⁴ Anny Cazenave, “Anthropogenic global warming threatens world cultural heritage,” *Environmental Research Measures* (9) May 15, 2014, <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/9/5/051001>.

³⁵ “Everglades National Park - UNESCO World Heritage Centre,” UNESCO, 2010, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/76>, (accessed May 11, 2023).

³⁶ “Everglades National Park - UNESCO World Heritage Centre,” UNESCO.

³⁷ “Everglades National Park: World Heritage Site,” United States National Parks Service, March 29, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/everglades-national-park-south-florida.htm>, (accessed May 14, 2023).

³⁸ “Everglades National Park - UNESCO World Heritage Centre,” UNESCO.

³⁹ “LCMAP Change Stories: Hurricanes in the Everglades,” United States Geologic Survey, July 15, 2019 <https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/lcmap/science/lcmap-change-stories-hurricanes-everglades>, (accessed May 14, 2023).

⁴⁰ “Climate Change and World Heritage” UNESCO, 2023, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/climatechange/>, (accessed May 14, 2023).

⁴¹ “Minister of State Böhmer condemns destruction of Iraqi cultural sites in Nimrud by the ISIS terrorist group and calls for peace in Iraq,” *World Heritage Convention*, UNESCO, March 9, 2015, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1246> (accessed June 28, 2023)

⁴² “Minister of State Böhmer condemns destruction of Iraqi cultural sites in Nimrud by the ISIS terrorist group and calls for peace in Iraq.”

⁴³ “Minister of State Böhmer condemns destruction of Iraqi cultural sites in Nimrud by the ISIS terrorist group and calls for peace in Iraq.”

⁴⁴ “Minister of State Böhmer condemns destruction of Iraqi cultural sites in Nimrud by the ISIS terrorist group and calls for peace in Iraq.”

⁴⁵ “Minister of State Böhmer condemns destruction of Iraqi cultural sites in Nimrud by the ISIS terrorist group and calls for peace in Iraq.”

⁴⁶ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, France, November 16, 1972, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

Actions Taken by the UN

UNESCO's actions towards the preservation of World Heritage Sites have been in a mainly administrative aid role.⁴⁷ The applications of the World Heritage program are based on the 50-Member State coalition that came together to preserve the sites endangered by the Aswan High Dam.⁴⁸ As such, the World Heritage program does not have the power to force action but operates on the administration of aid when requested and the recommendation of measures the coalition sees fit to help maintain the area as a Heritage Site.⁴⁹ The maintenance of the List of World Heritage Sites and the change of classification are based on a board of qualified individuals who vote on additions and modifications to the list and organization based on a simple majority.⁵⁰ This board has maintained a consistent role as the advisors of the list since it was laid out in the 1972 convention establishing the list.⁵¹

Since the implementation of the list of World Heritage Sites, UNESCO has been at odds with the non-interventionist nature of their World Heritage program.⁵² Sovereignty is ultimately reserved for the Member State within which a site lies.⁵³ This is a major factor in the loss of heritage sites, as infrastructure or development in or around a site are not run by UNESCO.⁵⁴ There is consideration for what is being done individually and recommendations are made for the maintenance of a site, but not the ability to formally prevent any development or action regarding the site.⁵⁵ This leads to a lack of actionable avenues for the committee to prevent site endangerment, instead requesting a local governing body to decide to adhere to UNESCO recommendations.⁵⁶ While UNESCO has total power regarding the inclusion or exclusion of sites on the World Heritage List, it lacks the directorial power over other government entities that another UN committee may have.⁵⁷ Although UNESCO does not have absolute power over its members, it does have the power to set forth requirements and guidelines for sites and their member states, which gives UNESCO a means to make actionable change as needed.⁵⁸

Case Study

Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City

The Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City was a World Heritage site in Liverpool, England.⁵⁹ The site was notable for its historic examples of trade technology and architecture as a major trading port for the British Empire.⁶⁰ The site consisted of six areas around the port, which showcased features such as their innovative dock building techniques and trade culture.⁶¹ The site was added to the list of World Heritage Sites in 2004.⁶² The site would later be added to the list of World Heritage Sites "in danger" in 2012.⁶³ Local development around the site had begun to contradict the provisions set forth in its inclusion as a World Heritage Site, stipulating that new buildings around the site must maintain a certain height restriction, as well as development of the water utilities system around the site endangering

⁴⁷ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, France, November 16, 1972, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

⁴⁸ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁴⁹ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵⁰ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵¹ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵² "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵³ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵⁴ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵⁵ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵⁶ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵⁷ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵⁸ "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO.

⁵⁹ "Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City - UNESCO World Heritage Centre" UNESCO, 2021, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1150>, (accessed April 22, 2023)

⁶⁰ "Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City - UNESCO World Heritage Centre," UNESCO.

⁶¹ "Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City - UNESCO World Heritage Centre," UNESCO.

⁶² "Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City - UNESCO World Heritage Centre," UNESCO.

⁶³ "Decision 44 COM 7A.34 Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (C 1150)," UNESCO, 2012, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4837>.

its notable infrastructure that originally warranted its inclusion.⁶⁴ The development of the “Liverpool Waters” would necessitate the site’s inclusion on the list of World Heritage Sites “in danger” every year until 2021.⁶⁵

The Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City was listed in a 2019 UNESCO “State of Conservation” report as threatened by multiple factors that could impact the integrity of the site.⁶⁶ These factors include a lack of governance of new housing developments around the site, lack of an effective site management plan, and a failure to implement maximum building height regulation around the site as required by UNESCO.⁶⁷ As stated in this conservation report, the site suffered from “lack of analysis and description of the townscape characteristics relevant to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and important views related to the property and its buffer zone.”⁶⁸ These reports would be a nearly annual audit of the site’s issues, published between 2006 and 2021.⁶⁹

In 2021, a decision had been reached by the UNESCO committee regarding the impact of the development around the site and its impact.⁷⁰ The impact of the urban development of the Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City had been deemed too severe to restore, and there had been an irreversible loss to the historical integrity of the site.⁷¹ This was combined with a refusal to follow preservation guidelines set forth at the site’s inclusion on the list of World Heritage Sites “in danger.”⁷² A decision within the World Heritage Committee was put forward in 2021, which officially delisted the area as a World Heritage Site.⁷³

The Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site would become the third site to be delisted, and most recent as of 2023.⁷⁴ This followed the removal of Germany’s Dresden Elbe Valley in 2009.⁷⁵ Oman’s Arabian Oryx Sanctuary was the first of the three to be delisted, in 2007.⁷⁶ All three sites were delisted as a result of development of the site for either resources or urban expansion, as the Elbe Valley site was delisted following construction of a large bridge at the site, and the Arabian Oryx site due to development of the land for oil drilling combined with loss of notable natural fauna.⁷⁷

Conclusion

World Heritage Sites are in critical danger if current trends continue.⁷⁸ The list of “Sites in Danger’s” consistent growth indicates that more record highs will be achieved in the coming years due to a number of factors, such as issues of resource allotment and urban development, which can come from the governing bodies overseeing them, or from the environment itself.⁷⁹ UNESCO is a collaborative body, and the World Heritage List is an example of this collaborative structure which has been evident since its first implementation in the 1960s.⁸⁰ There is language in the World Heritage Site convention that allows for aid on a site-by-site basis, but a more holistic approach to the

⁶⁴ Decision 36 COM 8C.1 Establishment of the World Heritage List in Danger (Inscribed Properties),” UNESCO, 2012, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4837/>.

⁶⁵ “Decision 36 COM 8C.1 Establishment of the World Heritage List in Danger (Inscribed Properties),” UNESCO.

⁶⁶ “Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City” UNESCO, 2021, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3881>, (accessed June 26, 2023)

⁶⁷ “Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City” UNESCO, 2021

⁶⁸ “Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City” UNESCO, 2021

⁶⁹ “Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City” UNESCO, 2021

⁷⁰ “Decision 44 COM 7A.34 Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (C 1150),” UNESCO, 2012, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4837>.

⁷¹ “Decision 44 COM 7A.34 Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (C 1150),” UNESCO.

⁷² “Decision 44 COM 7A.34 Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (C 1150),” UNESCO.

⁷³ “Decision 44 COM 7A.34 Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (C 1150),” UNESCO.

⁷⁴ “World Heritage List,” UNESCO, 2023, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>, (accessed May 20, 2023).

⁷⁵ “Dresden Elbe Valley,” UNESCO, 2009, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1156/>, (accessed May 14, 2023).

⁷⁶ “World Heritage List,” UNESCO.

⁷⁷ “World Heritage List,” UNESCO.

⁷⁸ “World Heritage List,” UNESCO.

⁷⁹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, France, November 16, 1972, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

⁸⁰ “World Heritage List,” UNESCO.

problem is required.⁸¹ There is also a problem in the consideration of the approach of mitigating existing damage, as opposed to prevention and elimination of risk factors involving the site.⁸² The destruction of these sites will have wide-reaching impacts on the governments that directly oversee them, as well as the world. From loss of environment to economic loss, and issues of sovereignty; a solution to this problem must address all of these issues with consideration to the unique challenges that could be faced in a program with such broad geographic reach.⁸³ This necessitates collaborative solutions to the pressing issues affecting the irreplaceable history of the world in all its aspects.⁸⁴

Committee Directives

During committee, delegates should consider the broader impacts of their decisions on the communities surrounding heritage sites, utilizing new and innovative methods for the protection of World Heritage sites that take advantage of the collaborative nature of the program. Debate should consider the costs and benefits of regional approaches versus a worldwide approach and by what methods this aid should be administered. Delegates should consider the effect that sovereignty has on their decisions, and the role of UNESCO as an advisory board in this administration. Overall, delegates should address these questions with realistic solutions for implementing their goals. Delegates must consider the effectiveness of recommendation-based administration and work with this framework in the development of more effective systems to preserve World Heritage Sites.

⁸¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, France, November 16, 1972, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

⁸² “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” UNESCO.

⁸³ “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” UNESCO.

⁸⁴ “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” UNESCO.

Annotated Bibliography

I. Protecting Education Systems within Conflict Regions

Jessica Alexander, Neil Boothby, and Mike Wessells, "Education and Protection of Children and Youth Affected by Armed Conflict: An Essential Link," *CPC Network* (2017) 6-10, <https://www.epcnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Alexander-Boothby-Wessells-Education-and-Protection-of-Children-and-Youth.pdf>.

The Care and Protection of Children (CPC) Learning Network is an organization that works to promote research and initiatives to improve the safety and welfare of children. This paper provides a sense of the protections a safe, sustainable educational environment can provide to youth and children. Educational environments can provide an opportunity for children and their families to process the impacts of conflict zones. As a result, it can provide those in need a sense of emotional protection. The article examines what parts of the educational process could be addressed when proposing ideas to protect educational institutions from the impacts of conflict.

Vidya Diwakar, "The Effect of Armed Conflict on Education: Evidence from Iraq," *The Journal of Development Studies* 51, no. 12 (August 24, 2015): 1702-1718.

The Journal of Development Studies is a peer-reviewed international journal focusing on development studies. The article examines the impact of armed conflicts on the different quantifiable aspects of education, such as the enrollment rates of students, with particular emphasis on the recent case study of Iraq. Both boys and girls are less likely to attend schools in the central parts of a Member State, especially in Iraq. The increased number of conflicts in the central areas of a state leads to dangerous conditions for children. It has also been reported that one cause of decline in education during conflict, especially in Iraq, comes from a shortage of teachers caused by targeted attacks on the system. The article discusses the disparities in both initial and continuous access to education caused by conflict affected areas.

Tony Gallagher, Gareth Robinson, Joanne Hughes, and David Connolly, "Education in conflict-affected areas: Final report," *Queen's University Belfast* (December 2018) 8-9, https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/global_education_security_and_stability_report_0319.pdf.

The British Council is an organization for international cultural and educational opportunities in the United Kingdom. One of these principles, set by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, is understanding the interactions between education and conflict. This is because the lack of conflict sensitive initiatives can lead to further cultural divides and an increased risk of recurring conflict. There is acknowledgement of each Member State and conflict zones having different conditions and needs. As a result, the report also notes that having a conflict-sensitivity analysis framework is important to building solutions that are specific to each conflict zone.

Kristin Hausler, "Protecting Education in Insecurity and Armed Conflict," *Education Above All and British Institute of International and Comparative Law* (2020) 9-14, https://www.biicl.org/documents/10245_peic_summary_2nd_edn.pdf.

The British Institute of International and Comparative Law is an independent review on topics surrounding international and comparative law. This handbook provides an overview of the international laws that impact the protection of education. The handbook discusses the context of international human rights law, like the Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960; international humanitarian law, like the Geneva Conventions; and international criminal law. Understanding this legal framework will provide further context of the protections surrounding education and provide further resources through several important documents in the handbook.

II. Developing International Collaborative Systems to Mitigate the Destruction of World Heritage Sites

Dacia Rose, “The Deliberate Destruction of Cultural Heritage and How (Not) to Repair It,” *Social Science Research Council*, 2022, <https://items.ssrc.org/where-heritage-meets-violence/the-deliberate-destruction-of-cultural-heritage-and-how-not-to-repair-it/>.

The Social Science Research Council is a nonprofit association producing online publications discussing policy-relevant social and behavioral sciences. “The Deliberate Destruction of Cultural Heritage and How (Not) to Repair It” discusses historic and contemporary examples of heritage destruction in Ukraine and the Middle East. The impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war and their effects on heritage are discussed at length, as well as historic examples of 2012 terrorist attacks against the World Heritage Site of Timbuktu which greatly damaged the city’s protected sites. The article provides explanation of the topic through a contemporary event to better understand the processes by which destruction occurs and the varied geographic locations in which it may take place.

Bénédicte Gaillard & Dennis Rodwell, “A Failure of Process? Comprehending the Issues Fostering Heritage Conflict in Dresden Elbe Valley and Liverpool — Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Sites,” *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice*, (2015) 6, 16-22, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275251986_A_Failure_of_Process_Comprehending_the_Issues_Fostering_Heritage_Conflict_in_Dresden_Elbe_Valley_and_Liverpool_-_Maritime_Mercantile_City_World_Heritage_Sites.

The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice is a journal focusing on culture and history. The article gives a detailed overview of the process that led to the delisting of the Dresden Elbe Valley World Heritage Site. The Article contains detailed information on the process of delisting a site, as well as the circumstances leading up to the delisting as it relates to the development of infrastructure that threatened the site. There are also charts which give detailed timelines of the site’s development and delisting. This provides an in-depth understanding of what a de-listing entails, as well as the conflicts that can arise when urban development comes into problems caused by a heritage site.

“Preparing World Heritage Nominations,” UNESCO, 2011, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/preparing-world-heritage-nominations/>.

“Preparing World Heritage Nominations” is a manual published by UNESCO which provides detailed explanations on what World Heritage Site Status entails, as well as the process through which nomination and addition take place. The manual provides a detailed explanation of the workings of the World Heritage Site list, along with large resources on the topic generally, all notated and divided by topic with page numbers included. The manual also includes tables and notes in the median which provide easily understandable information to someone with little to no background in United Nations operations or the UNESCO committee. The understanding of the program holistically is imperative in understanding the specifics of a site in danger of being destroyed.

Anna Leask & Alan Fyall, *Managing World Heritage Sites*, Routledge 2006, <https://www.routledge.com/Managing-World-Heritage-Sites/Leask-Fyall/p/book/9780750665469>.

Managing World Heritage Sites is a collection of articles focusing on the management of World Heritage Sites from the focus of local and state governments. This book provides detailed examples from multiple sites on issues like tourism, maintenance, and technology’s role in site maintenance. This is broken up into sections which relate each issue to a site or specific complication, which are listed in the table of contents in an easily navigable way. This provides information on the various issues that must be considered in problem solving related to heritage sites, as well as showing the varied issues that can be faced in sites that differ geographically, culturally, or otherwise.