United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
London International Model United Nations
17th Session | 2016
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Topic A: Protecting World Heritage Sites in conflict zones

Introduction

The List of World Heritage in Danger is devised in order to educate the international community on the conditions that are a risk factor towards World Heritage Sites (WHS), and to urge corrective action. Currently 46 UNESCO WHS are on the World Heritage in Danger List. There are many potential threats to a WHS, such as political instability and natural disasters. There are two types of Danger categories: one is ‘ascertained’, where the danger must refer to a specific and proven immediate threat, whilst the other is ‘potential’ - where the threat could lead to negative effects on its World Heritage values. The World Heritage Convention of 1972 states that the World Heritage Committee (which is made up of 21 Member States who serve for 4-6 years) can add to the List of World Heritage in Danger properties, whose protection requires “major operations… and for which assistance has been requested” ("UNESCO, Convention, II. Article 11.4,” 1972).

Once a WHS has been added to the List of World Heritage in Danger, the World Heritage Committee can instantly designate funds from the World Heritage Fund to assist the site in question. Furthermore, the international community is informed, in the hope that it will collaborate and work in tandem to save the site. In addition, specific preservation needs can be addressed with speed by the Conservation Community. In some cases, the addition to the Danger List leads to quick conservation action. The Galapagos Islands in Ecuador and El Vizcaino in Mexico are two successful examples of this working: the threat of being placed on the List encouraged the two governments to take preventative steps. Another example is that of the Giant’s Causeway where, with UNESCO’s support, the Department of Environment in Northern Ireland became more active in the development at the Giant’s Causeway. This
demonstrates that simply with ‘moral’ support, the power of the name UNESCO can bring about change for a site. A programme for corrective measures and subsequent monitoring of the situation is developed by the World Heritage Committee, taking the concerned State Party into consideration. In order to be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, the site’s values must be restored.

There are varying attitudes from the state parties on being placed on the List, with two primary reasons being the cause: some view this as dishonor, whilst others are thankful to receive the additional support and international attention to help solve the issues. One must note that being placed on the List should not be viewed as sanction, but rather a method of prioritizing sites’ needs in order to respond to conservation issues in a quick and effective manner. The Committee has made it clear that “inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger should not be seen as a sanction, but as the acknowledgement of a condition that calls for safeguarding measures, and as a means of securing resources for that purpose”. Nevertheless, being labeled as a World Heritage Site in Danger can either be seen as a rebuke of the state for poor conservation, or can imply solidarity. In Syria, for example, it can be argued that it is both: a rebuke because the military are also using the site as a battlefield, as well as implying solidarity, for the site needs protection, and with rebels occupying the site, military action on this WHS is unavoidable.

In the instance that a property loses the characteristics which determined its inscription on the World Heritage List, i.e. that a site must demonstrate at least one of the criteria of the outstanding universal value, the World Heritage Committee may remove the site not only from the Danger List, but remove it as a World Heritage Site. So far this has only happened twice: the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary, Oman 2007, and the Dresden Elbe, Germany 2009. The Sanctuary lost its status because its perimeters were too small to remain a site.

Ancient structures are faced with physical destruction, as well as looting as a consequence of war- precious works of art are being traded on the black market in most instances for weapons. Understandably it is hard to come up with a solution in a war zone in order to safeguard these masterpieces. These works of art are transported incorrectly, getting damaged on the way, as well as being sold for only a fraction of their true value. For example: eleven busts from Palmyra were sold for £19,200- 1% of their true value. This leads to many a problem, both short-term and log-term, and may result in the art market crashing, after the conflict is over.

**Discussion of the Problem**

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), a non-governmental organization (NGO), has a formal relationship with UNESCO and ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council), as well as INTERPOL. Their aim is to combat illicit traffic in cultural goods, as well as promote risk management and emergency preparedness in order to safeguard world cultural heritage in the event of a disaster, both man-
made and natural. In response to the looting in Syria, as a result of the civil war, ICOM has assembled a list of cultural objects at risk - the “red list”. This is a method to help law enforcement agencies identify these objects in order to stop the trade of these rare cultural objects. Looting from cultural sites is not the only issue, however, as people are beginning to loot museums too, for the same reasons as they are trading artifacts from WHS sites- to sell or trade, in most instances, for weapons. An ICOM senior official has stated that: “curators of museums are being forced to hide the most valuable items in banks and cellars”.

The increasingly common and permanent threats to cultural heritage in times of political instability, illustrated through recent conflicts, are growing. Some actions can reduce their impact by staging awareness-raising campaigns, which will ameliorate our knowledge and understanding of the current situation, and by improving the technical capabilities of cultural heritage professionals and customs officers. Furthermore, efforts, both national and international, must be done, through collaboration, thus showing a united front. As a result, the Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Heritage Project has adopted a three step approach.

Numerous international conventions on the protection of cultural heritage have already been created, however, the two principal conventions, were drafted by UNESCO and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT). Furthermore, it is important to note the Hague Law (1954), which is congruous with the Convention for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in Situations of Armed Conflict, the Paris Law, which derived from the 1970 UNESCO Convention mentioned below, and the Rome Law, which correspond with the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention, which are also examined below.

1954 The Hague Law:

In essence, the Law looks at protecting cultural goods and heritage in the event of armed conflict, both national and international. Yet this approach illustrates the significance we, as an international community, placed on cultural goods whilst limiting an area of what was to be protected. This was created in light of the destruction of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, during the Second World War.

1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property:

Its chief achievement is the establishment of an international public policy, where the 123 members states are obligated to collaborate to aid the indemnity of consequential cultural objects. Nevertheless, the Convention’s capacity is strictly defined, due to the consensual nature of its procedures.
1970 Paris Law:
This Law derived from the 1970 UNESCO Convention. Its significance lies in the fact that the clauses and the initiated international instrument aimed at tackling the unlawful import, export and possession of cultural goods, became illegal at a national, as well as international level.

1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects:
Considering UNESCO’s Convention’s limitations, this 1995 Convention addresses the issues of privately owned and illegally transported objects, rather than those in possession of the state.

1995 Rome Law:
This Law may be identified within the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention. It is focused on the restitution of illicitly obtained cultural goods and disregards the Criminal Law. One can see its bias nature, for the concept of due diligence is the basis of this Law.

The Goal
These Resolutions, Conventions, and Codes aim at safeguarding cultural objects and cultural heritage for posterity by attempting to create a universal code of conduct for member states in case they come into contact with looted goods. On the other hand, the limitations are clear - there is no way to guarantee the cessation of cultural looting, for if the participants of the crimes do not heed their own government and abide by the laws of their country, one cannot expect them to conform to international Codes of Conduct and Ethics. Furthermore, not all countries are member states, and some of the legislation, such as the 1991 Basel Resolution, is not binding. No organization or international body (including the United Nations) can force other nations to conform as that would infringe upon national sovereignty. The Hague Law makes provisions for responses during armed conflict, whilst the Paris and Rome Laws are focused more on restitution of the cultural goods on the basis of the criminal activity involved in obtaining the cultural property.

One must question the criminal aspects of the illicit antiquities trade. Not only is there a definitional debate in regards to what constitutes ‘organized crime’, but also one can see discrepancies in the Resolutions, Laws, and Conventions mentioned above, such as sanctions for participants in the illicit trade of antiquities. The laws and clauses vary depending on the time in which the crimes were committed, for example during armed conflict. The question which subsequently arises is: should a difference in the law and the various solutions to crimes committed during times of peace or conflict be reflected in the Conventions and Resolutions? Many domestic and transnational laws aimed at the illicit import, export and possession of cultural heritage stem from the work carried out by the different organizations of the United Nations, such as UNESCO and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). Cooperation between the various UN bodies further highlights the international
communities’ understanding of the need to safeguard and prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural goods, including antiquities.

The 1990 UN Model Treaty for the Prevention of Crimes that Infringe on the Cultural Heritage of Peoples in the Form of Moveable Property, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders is based upon cooperation in penal matters. Article 2(c) takes into consideration “international conspiracies” (referring to organised crime), stating that member states should make provisions and legislation which targets “persons and institutions within its territory” and their involvement with organized crime (UNODC, 1994, p. 107). Sanctions for the perpetrators are suggested in Article 3. Nevertheless, albeit some effective instruments are introduced in this document, they are theoretical for it still has the status of a model treaty. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) called upon another session again for the purpose to resubmit this model treaty’s recommendations on tackling the problem of trafficking illicit cultural property (ECOSOC Resolution 2008/23.3).

Case study: The Syrian Arab Republic

This section is dedicated to the Syrian Arab Republic, more specifically to the ancient city of Palmyra, as the latest victim to fall prey to the warfare. This conflict escalates on a daily basis. August 23, 2015, saw an escalation in the violence when the Islamic State (IS) demolished the Temple of Baal-Shamin by detonating explosive (BBC August Palmyra, 2015). War, insurgency and terrorism are all relevant to the Syrian conflict, which is not only affecting the socio-economic and political stability in Syria, but also the neighboring countries. Furthermore, this conflict is severely detrimental to this historically rich cultural heritage of the nation, where numerous ancient sites are in jeopardy not merely of being looted, but destroyed for eternity.

Syria has been chosen as a case study because the Syrian conflict, which started in March 2011, is the world’s largest humanitarian crisis in recent years, with the Syrian Civil War commencing in August 2011. Five of the six Syrian UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) have been damaged or destroyed in the process, whilst almost 300 other sites of great cultural heritage value have been also affected (UNESCO, 2015). The six WHS sites are as follows (Fig. 1), with the year that they became a WHS site in brackets (WHS List, 2015):

- the Ancient Cities of Aleppo (1986),
- Bosra (1980),
- Damascus (1979),
- Palmyra (1980),
- Crac des Chevaliers and Qal’at Salah El-Din (2006),
UNESCO and the WHS
UNESCO’s role is to protect its WHS sites, thus it is focusing on protecting and preserving Syria’s rich cultural heritage. Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, addressed all parties of the conflict to safeguard their cultural heritage in March 2012. Nevertheless, this did not accomplish much, with the political situation decreasing rapidly.

June 2013 saw the six WHS sites placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in order to “draw attention to the risks they are facing because of the situation in the country”. Today the conflict still rages on, which shows that the Director-General’s appeal to the Syrian government, as well as the other parties involved in the civil war, had no effect. In addition, the sites were placed on the Danger List a year into the conflict, meanwhile being on the List did not help protect the sites: its purpose was to alert the international community of the severity of the situation.
Palmyra

Palmyra is a dead city in the middle of a desert, which is used by the rebels in order to take cover from the military. To name but one example, the Temple of Bel, which was consecrated in 32 CE, has bullet and shell holes on its southern and eastern walls. One can see traces of open fire on the northern, western and southern walls, as well as the damages on the columns of the Temple’s north-eastern corner.

Compared to its antebellum state, Palmyra looks very different today, with new roads cutting across the site. Numerous temporary structures have been erected, thus altering the outline of the Palmyra Archaeological Park. The ground upon which the site is built is shifting. Possible explanations of the terrain softening could be because of military activities on the territory of the archaeological park since 2012, as well as the pressure created by the shell blasts and collapsed monumental structures.

Recent Developments

On June 24, 2015, the Syrian government has confirmed that ISIS have destroyed a further two ancient Muslim shrines (see below) at Palmyra. Reportedly ISIS have also planted home-made explosive devices around the city parameters, however their intention is unclear: do ISIS mean to blow up the remainder of the Palmyra Archaeological Park, or are the bombs in place in order to keep out the Syrian military forces? As the world watches the military conflict rage on, cultural objects and architecture of significant value are being destroyed or looted.

On August 19, 2015, the world was thrown in a frenzy of the torture and murder of 83-year-old Khaled Asaad, the retired director of the Palmyra Museum and curator of the antiquities. It is believed that ISIS militants tried to discover the location of secret treasures, which have either been on the site for thousands of years in various tombs and burial grounds, as well as the artefacts which were hidden at the start of the occupation of Palmyra. Asaad refused to relinquish the secrets of Palmyra and has taken them to his grave. He was a renowned scholar who had dedicated his life to studying and safeguarding Palmyra for posterity. Furthermore, on August 23, 2015, the
The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) detonated the Temple of Baalshamin, which was consecrated in 17CE. Bokova stated that:

“Daesh is killing people and destroying sites, but cannot silence history and will ultimately fail to erase this great culture from the memory of the world. Despite the obstacles and fanaticism, human creativity will prevail, buildings and sites will be rehabilitated, and some will be rebuilt.”

(WHC Baalshamin, 2015)

condemning these acts as war crimes. She asserted that UNESCO “stands by all Syrian people in their efforts to safeguard their heritage, a heritage for all humanity”. Daesh is another way of calling this militant group, adopted by numerous states who find their war crimes abhor able, for it means “to crush” in their Arabic.

**Bloc Positions**

**Europe:** The rich culture of the European continent has been protected rigorously from damage, and efforts to maintain sites have been mostly effective. In Italy, which boasts the highest number of World Heritage Sites in a single country, efforts to restore sites are considered a priority, given the revenue they generate through tourism. This strong attachment to culture has led the continent to deplore the destruction of any site, in line with UNESCO’s policy to condemn any meditated attempt to destroy world heritage. In conflict zones, the destruction of world heritage sites becomes a difficult issue, as in European military actions, the regard for heritage is very limited, but not insignificant. Officially, European countries have committed to the preservation of sites, but this policy is easily overshadowed by geopolitical priorities. Interestingly, however, the protection of culture is such a critical European value that the destruction of sites in a foreign conflict plays a not fully insignificant role in European decision to embark on a humanitarian intervention. (Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention 1954, Article 7.)

**USA/ North America:** The USA condemns the destruction of World Heritage Sites, perhaps not to the degree of Europe, but nonetheless considers it a fundamental issue soliciting international attention. The existence of such groups as the “American Association of Museums” and the “American Alliance of Museums” is testament to the commitment towards the preservation of heritage both domestically and abroad. It is clear that the USA is fundamentally against any illicit arms trade, and therefore any revenue accumulated by pernicious parties as a result of selling artifacts is viewed negatively.

**Middle Eastern Bloc:** While it is true that much of the conflict discussed above is currently occurring within this region, the governments of states within this bloc are also committed to reducing the destruction of world heritage. They have called upon the support of the international community in many instances, both within the context
of demanding assistance in the de-escalation of conflict (and hence the protection of sites), and also the specific assistance to sites in clear danger of destruction. They are generally against the protection of sites through the movement of artifacts abroad to safeguard them, as they retain the place of origin of any object should be respected. Hence initiatives to assist in the prevention of WHS destruction in the form of a transfer of objects in rejected.

**Rest of the world:** All regions suffer from WHS decay, though the instances in which these are in a conflict area are more reduced. As a whole, the international community is very much in favour of protecting any site, as it has strong cultural roots within a regional context, but also due to the revenue that much of the sites produce. Alternatively, the WHS label serves to protect areas from commercial use, and this has been used many times over around the world to preserve natural ecosystems and so on.

**Points a Resolution Should Address**

- The first key issue to address is the inherent lack of coordination amongst the various international conventions and accords (such as the Hague Convention). While many sound points have been made, the inherent bias of past agreements has led to a lack of coordination amongst members states in their efforts to protect world heritage.
- These outdated documents need to be redrafted to suit contemporary issues, most notably the question of (violent) **Non-state Actors.** How best to account for situations in which a conflict is carried out with such groups is critical to the protection of sites.
- The ramifications to the instrumentalisation of WHSs for a profit by pernicious individuals/ groups. Again, the question of selling heritage is one of fundamental importance, especially if its profits are used to finance a war-effort.
- The financing of any such initiative. Which other UN or international organs should be factored into the equation, and how should any initiative be coordinated?

**Sources**

- List of World Heritage Sites: [http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/]
Topic B: Supporting the pursuit of inclusive and equitable education with regard to the Education 2030 Agenda

Introduction

Since international aid flows began at the beginning of the 20th Century, the topic of education has become a central one to any developmental agency. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and nearly all bilateral development-arrangements have posited the need for investing in human capital in a sustainable manner; most notably through education. The case studies of an increased access to education resulting in stronger economic growth, a decrease in inequalities, and an improvement to public policy are countless, and the breadth of education’s impact on a variety of domains is astounding.1

It is fundamental to outline the aspects of education, as the term refers to a multitude of things. The main aspect is in reference to the promotion of basic knowledge to young individuals (minors), and is divided into primary (ages 5-10) and secondary (ages 11-16/17/18, depending on the national context of countries) education. Tertiary education implies any further education, and is more in reference to skills. Outside of the academic context, there is also purely skills based education which relates to technology-use, such as the education provided to an agricultural worker to use new strains of crops on different terrains. This last aspect of education is

critical in any development initiative, as for a program to be successful, it needs to ensure that the local communities it affects are able to understand and implement the specific processes and utilize the technologies provided to their full capacities. This can also be tied into initiatives such as life-long learning, which aims to increase the skill-base of a labor-force to both increase employability in a range of sectors, and to protect against unemployment of mono-skilled individuals.

Since its establishment in 1945, UNESCO has had a variety of missions, from poverty eradication to sustainable development to intercultural dialogue. The organization has used education as the main tool to achieving these missions. The right to education is a fundamental human right and is recognized as a key to unlocking successful human, social and economic development.

Their educational objectives are subscribed to support Education for All (EFA), as a means to, but not limited to: regional leadership in education; strengthen education systems worldwide from early childhood to the adult years; to respond to contemporary global challenges through education.\(^2\)

**Discussion of the Problem**

The 2030 Education Agenda

In 2015, the international community (represented through intergovernmental bodies such as the UN, through civil society, the private sector and youth worldwide) met in Incheon, South Korea to produce the Incheon Declaration. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, this agenda aims at improving the education of all individuals without bias through a collaboration of actors at all levels (international, national, regional, etc.). This process will be monitored to ascertain the successes or failures of such initiatives, with frequent reporting to ensure compliance is being met throughout the world. While the program establishes broad goals for education, the specifics surrounding the funding of any initiative is not clearly specified. According to the declaration, the need for funding is paramount to success, though the channels for finance are not outlined. It upholds that public expenditure within any country should have a clear focus on education (between 15-20%), though overlooks the contextually specific conditions that countries face that may come into conflict with this objective. For example, a UN Member State with no formal or established governance structure would find it incredibly challenging to adhere to these claims. Likewise, a Member State currently engaged in a crisis (be it political, environmental, or economic) would struggle to allocate such a high percentage of public expenditure to education.

While the Document outlines the need for an international framework of support (notably in a North-South manner, designating the flow of Aid from the developed to the developing in order to assist their education-programmes) the mechanisms are rife with ambiguities and leave far too much of the implementation process open to

\(^2\)http://en.unesco.org/themes/education-21st-century
interpretation. In order to ensure that countries are able to fully maximize their returns to education, it is imperative that a more binding framework is introduced. As it stands, the commitments of larger economies to the cause can easily be ignored, and if any real progress is to occur, these aspects must be considered. While it is true that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are very active in the financing of educational projects worldwide, the success of their achievements is very much dependent on

What is perhaps the most important element that is missing from this framework is the lack of specificity regarding the aspects of educational initiatives themselves. While the international community has universally agreed on the need to increase initiatives, the programs and pedagogy are still left to national interpretation. This relates once again to the issue of sovereignty, as it is imperative that a single vision of education is not grafted onto the world, but nonetheless there is ample room for failure. For example, an autocracy can implement a strict educational regime and succeeds in increasing attendance, length of enrolment, and attainment, but at the same time propagate false or otherwise government-constructed information that will not prepare its labor force for international success. This raises a contentious debate, as to whether an international standard should be established to primary or even secondary education, and what consequences will arise due to this.

Another closely related issue is that of teaching-arrangements. Different cultures adopt varying arrangements of teaching-styles, and the traditional forms of the “classroom” may not necessarily be the most successful methods to diffuse knowledge. The ambiguity of the declaration in this case can be seen as a positive aspect, as it allows for different societal structures to adopt and mold practices to their own preferred styles of learning. Conversely, however, this means that the costs of monitoring success are increased significantly, as any evaluation methodology will have to adapt itself perfectly to differing contexts to adequately measure progress. Furthermore, it is not necessarily a given that being educated in a different environment will provide individuals with the same set of skills to be active in the globalized world; if systems are allowed to maintain heterogeneity then they run the risk of producing individuals who, although “educated” in their specific cultural contexts, are then unable to relate with one another cross-borders. It will be difficult for a Ghanaian woman to find work in Thailand if the curriculums of the two countries have produces such distinctions in the skill-sets acquired by their citizens. The questions to resolve here are many-fold: does UNESCO call for a universal educational program, continue to emphasize cultural practices, or adopt some framework to allow for certain levels of heterogeneity to be maintained while promoting key areas of focus?

Critical Thinking Methodologies:

This brings us to the question of Critical Thinking. As an educational strategy currently in practice in many countries, the evidence regarding its successes in creating a freethinking and mentally-apt citizenry is vast. The process itself encourages individuals to assess situations from a variety of perspectives in order to hypothesize
better outcomes whilst minimizing collateral damage. With the ability to analyze things critically, a labor-force is then able to think for themselves and strive to improve conditions. Of course this value is extremely contextually relevant, and in many parts of the world is not emphasized. Referring back to a situation under an authoritarian regime, a country may choose to exclude Critical Thinking from curriculums in order to maintain a stronger social and political stability that it feels is optimum for growth. This is due to the very volatile situations that Critical Thinking can lead to; the persistent questioning of authority-structures can lead to reformation and internal struggle which may not necessarily lead to favorable conditions. While Critical Thinking is often associated with democratic systems (as it incites constant revisions to the system to best fit changing conditions), it is mutually exclusive to other forms of governance. The term itself is ambiguous, as to be “critical” of something can entail both an analysis of contextual factors to change an existing framework, but also a collective criticism of outside practices in favor of the already existing ones within a situation. This latter case can be interpreted as a country choosing to uphold existing educational practices as a criticism of international ones, and thus creating a paradoxical scenario in which educational practices are allowed to advance in divergent paths, and hence come into conflict with one another to create tension. UNESCO’s task is therefore to establish whether or not Critical Thinking Methodologies (CTMs) are a desirable characteristic of education, adopt a definition that resonates with the international community, and create a framework that allows for them to be implemented across national education schemes without compromising the integrity of heritage within different cultures.

MDG – SDG transitions:

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Nonetheless it does not differ greatly from Millennium Development Goal 2: “Achieve universal primary education.” As 2015 marks the end of the period for the MDGs, the continuation of international effort in this domain clearly shows the failure of the former initiative to successfully fulfil its objectives. While the progress from 1990 is substantial (from 52% enrolment into primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa to today’s 80%)4, millions still remain unable to access this public good. This issue relates to larger questions of development and poverty traps, and hence requires investment into other infrastructure to strengthen any initiative to increase enrolment. However, again, the concept of development cannot be considered outside of education, and thus a cohesive framework which aims to see growth in both domains simultaneously must be formulated. As of now, there exists a strong synergy between UNESCO and other agencies, such as but not limited to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the initiatives on the ground that

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aim to alleviate the socio-economic strain on families to allow them to send their children to school.

“Large disparities remain in primary school enrolment, and the poorest and most disadvantaged children bear the heaviest burden” – UNDP report 2015.

One of the primary concerns of educational access initiatives revolve around the contexts of families. The opportunity costs of investing in their children’s education outweigh the immediate benefits of keeping them at home to assist in the economic activities of the household. The returns to education are not always apparent, and families are often reluctant, or are simply so entrenched in a poverty trap, that the option of sending a child to school is not feasible. These problems have in part been tackled by parent-educational initiatives, which aim to inform parents of the returns to education, but these are not always successful.\(^5\) Should an international incentive structure be adopted? Ideas like the Conditional Cash Transfers used primarily in Mexico (and now around the world) have picked up speed, whereby families receive a monetary incentive to keep their children in school, but what are the realistic prospects of this under different conditions in other countries?

**Bloc Positions**

Because this topic is still an issue in a large number of both developing and developed countries, parties can rather be viewed in support or against a certain MDG/SDG:

- **Middle Eastern Member States** - Consists of multiple Middle Eastern nations that oppose equal rights for women, equal access to education being the root of the problem.

- **‘Solitary’ Member States** - Made up out of nations who wish to remain solitary and refuse to form coalitions with other nations. Hold their sovereignty over international cooperation. Mostly these nations are categorised as well as being under non-democratic rule.

- **Unequal Education Member States** - Made up out of nations against equal education, whether it be gender or class related.

- **East Asian Member States** - Consists of multiple highly populated Asian MS who are not able to supply sufficient amounts of care demanded and needed by the population. Lack in providing and implementing from the ground up, developmental policies.

- **Southern and Western Asian Member States** - Consists of highly populated nations with poor child health, maternal health, a large abundance of poverty and extreme hunger.

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• Level of education advocated - there are distinct differences which need to be noted, based on the level of education attained and the policies used by governments to further educate their citizens.

Moreover different UN bodies have an invested interest in a certain working framework, which can be implemented, to fulfil equal education for all. Education is seen as the key to unlock access to all the other MDGs and SDGs. Using Education as a means to attain sustainable development, as set out in those goals.

• The UNDP, has invested interest in achieving universal primary education.

• UNICEF, has the focus of basic education and gender equality. On the basis that education is a basic human right.

• The ILO, supports international education goals through combatting child labour, promoting social dialogue and freedom of association and developing skills and employability strategies. They work closely with UNESCO to promote principles of quality teaching.  

• UN Women’s main concern is for a girl or woman in school is not just realizing her fundamental right, but also has a far greater chance to realise her full potential in the world. Lesser chance of her staying in poverty and gives her the chance to help her family to do better.

• the UNHCR, has adopted an Education Strategy, with the aim to increase access to a range of safe, quality education opportunities for refugees. Through working closely with national authorities to promote the inclusion of refugee and stateless children into their respective national education systems.

• The World Bank group tries to further education through their new 10 year Education Strategy, which advocates ‘learning for all’.

• UNESCO, focuses on an array of different aspects of education: Lifelong learning systems; Literacy for all; Teachers; Skills for Work and Life; Monitoring and coordinating education development.

**Points a Resolution Should Address**

The important question to ask is what UNESCO’s focus should be in regards to education: To call for a universal educational program? Continue to emphasize cultural practices? Or adopt some framework to allow for certain levels of heterogeneity to be maintained while promoting key areas of focus?

- Noting the importance of national sovereignty, UNESCO nonetheless needs to find a way to create legal and policy frameworks which promote accountability and

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transparency, plus participatory governance and coordinated partnerships across sectors.

- If done so, pay special attention to the Private/public distinction.

- Collaboration, cooperation, coordination and monitoring of implementation based on concrete data collected independently.

- The development of a global partnership for progress.

- To ensure full implementation of the 2030 education agenda, policy adjustment and implementation arrangements.

- As with any initiative, the financing aspect is one of the most critical; note public spending on education. (see discussion).

- Coordinate the effective implementation of the 2030 education agenda:
  - Undertaking advocacy to maintain political commitment;
  - Facilitate and keep open the dialogue on policies and their implementation;
  - Knowledge sharing and standard setting;
  - Monitor progress;
  - Gather global, regional and national stakeholders in this process of implementation;
  - A method of coordinating the overall standard of education.

Key Questions to ask when considering this topic:

- How can the progress of the MDGs be monitored?

- How can MS’ improve women’s access to higher education and the equal access to education, note female, trans, disabled etc.

- How can developing nations have an impact on the achievement of the goals?

Further Reading

The World Banks’ Education Strategy:
Sources


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Position Papers

What is a position paper?

A position paper is a statement of policy, which is intended to communicate an overall position of a country on a particular topic debated in the committee. Position papers should be brief and outline the general policies rather than specific measures.

Each delegate should submit one position paper per topic to be debated by the committee (note: most of the committees have two proposed topics). Each paper should be approximately one page per topic.

LIMUN offers a short guide on how to write a position paper. It is available on our website: http://limun.org.uk/FCKfiles/File/PP_Guide.pdf

Deadlines

The deadline for the submission of delegates’ position papers is 20 February 2016. Failure to submit by this deadline will render delegates ineligible for Diplomacy Awards.

Positions Papers will have to be submitted in a publicly-accessible Dropbox, to be provided by committee directors. At their discretion, directors may provide feedback in individuals cases if so requested.

The most worthy work submitted in a committee will earn the delegate a Best Position Paper Award. The length of any one paper should not exceed 500 words.
Contact Details

For any enquiries relating to your committee proceedings or if you want to get in touch with your committee’s directors, or for submission of position papers:

- please e-mail: unesco@limun.org.uk

Other enquiries regarding the Conference:

- please e-mail: enquiries@limun.org.uk

Before contacting LIMUN please make sure you have read FAQ section on our website: http://limun.org.uk/faq