



UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Vision

UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the alleviation of poverty, sustainable development and inter-cultural dialogue through education, sciences, culture, communication and information. Five overarching objectives guide UNESCO's work:

1. Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning.
2. Mobilizing scientific knowledge and science policy for sustainable development.
3. Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges.
4. Safeguarding cultural heritage, promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.
5. Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication.

Work in Iran

UNESCO in Iran is represented by UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) which is a sub-regional office for four countries of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan. UTCO works closely with various governmental and non-governmental partners in the fields of Culture, Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, and Communication and Information as detailed below.



UNESCO footprints in Iran.

Education: UNESCO supports Iran in its efforts to achieve the targets under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) in the areas of education policy, planning and strategy; education data collection, analysis and reporting; literacy and lifelong learning; technical and vocational education and training, and ICT in education. UNESCO contributes to the national implementation of SDG Goal 4 through a combination of knowledge-sharing, providing upstream policy advice and capacity building, facilitating policy dialogues and developing partnerships. In implementing its programmes in education, UNESCO engages closely with a range of partners including the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, the Ministry of Education, the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) and the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) under the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare and UNICEF.



Introductory Workshop on Inclusive Approaches to Education of Children with Special Needs 2018 © M. Ansari / UNESCO

Natural Sciences: UNESCO activities in the field of Natural Sciences in Iran cover four main areas: strengthening freshwater security, fostering international science collaboration for earth systems and biodiversity, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Strengthening “Science, Technology, Innovation (STI)” practices. Iran hosts three centers functioning under the auspices of UNESCO related to Water, one related to Science & Technology and one center related Oceanography. Iran is also a very active member of the UNESCO’s International Hydrological Programme (IHP) on the management of water resources in arid zones (G-WADI) and the International Drought Initiative (IDI). UNESCO contributes to improve eco-system conservation and management through its “Man and Biosphere” (MAB) programme. There are currently 13 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and 1 UNESCO Geopark in Iran. UNESCO is fully involved in the maintenance and rehabilitation of sustainable and historical underground water systems like the Qanats or Karez in the cluster countries.



Qeshm Island UNESCO Global Geopark @Asghar Besharati

Culture: At present, Iran has 23 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and 13 Intangible Cultural Heritage elements registered on UNESCO’s list of Intangible Cultural Heritage . In the field of culture, the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) is the key national partner for UNESCO. UNESCO collaborates with ICHHTO on the preservation, restoration and management of cultural heritage sites and preservation of underwater cultural heritage as well as safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. UNESCO also supports ICHHTO in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property and sustainable tourism management.



Chogān, a horse-riding game accompanied by music and storytelling, inscribed in 2017 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, © 2016 by Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO)

Social and Human Sciences: The Social and Human Sciences programme helps to facilitate intercultural dialogue in the cluster countries by developing efficient dialogue and creating synergies within cultures and religions.

UNESCO advocates for physical education and sports as enablers for sustainable development. Consequently, UNESCO supports activities implemented by national and sub-regional counterparts in order to highlight the power of sports in development. UNESCO also assists cluster countries to voice and engage youth in policy-making by gathering miscellaneous stakeholders to discuss any topics of youth interest. UNESCO thus provides opportunities to young people to become actors for sustainable development in their communities.



Event on the occasion of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Workshop, where stakeholders discussed the role of youth engagement in contributing to the development of geoparks and sustainability of the local community. © UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office

Communication and Information: The priorities of UNESCO’s Communication and Information programme in Iran include equitable access to information and knowledge including for persons with disabilities, capacity building of media professionals with a focus on environmental issues and science journalism for sustainable development, and strengthening Media and Information Literacy competencies. Through the Memory of the World Programme, UNESCO supports preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage in Iran. Iran has 10 documentary heritage items registered on UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register.



Jāme’ al-Tavarikh by Rašīd-al-Dīn Fażl-Allāh Hamadāni: Iranian documentary heritage registered on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2017