

Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

Summary	
Organisation: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)	Date: February 2011
Description of Organisation	
The Organisation <p>UNESCO is a UN Specialised Agency, with 193 member states (more than any other multilateral organisation). As an inter-governmental organisation it offers a forum for the negotiation of global agreements (e.g. the World Heritage Convention), a facility for policy exchanges and capacity building, and a centre for standard-setting and monitoring in the 5 fields of education, natural sciences, social sciences, culture and communications and information. It has a regular budget, through assessed contributions, of about \$330m a year, and mobilises greater amounts in voluntary contributions (“extra-budgetary funding”). UK funding is at £15m a year of which 98% is the assessed contribution. Some 60% of funding to UNESCO qualifies as oda, an increase from 25% in the 1990s reflecting a greater developmental focus.</p>	
What UNESCO does <p>UNESCO is the co-ordinator of Education for All (EFA, the common programme shared with the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the FTI) and leads within the UN on the UN Literacy Decade and the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. UNESCO publishes the annual independent EFA Global Monitoring Report, monitoring progress towards the six 2015 Goals, and sponsors a High Level Panel on EFA and an annual EFA High-Level Meeting.</p> <p>UNESCO publishes the triennial World Water Development Report, hosts the secretariat of the World Water Assessment Programme (shared between 26 UN agencies), and runs the International Hydrology Programme for water management and the prevention of water-related conflicts. It runs a network of over 500 Man and Biosphere Reserves; and hosts the International Oceanographic Commission, which incorporates the Global Tsunami Warning System. UNESCO has sponsored a set of international Declarations on Bioethics and Human Rights, in regard to the use of human genetic data and cloning, and developed the 2005 Convention against Doping in Sport.</p> <p>In the cultural field, UNESCO administers the body of Conventions on Heritage Protection and on trade in cultural objects that it has developed since 1970, as well as providing the forum for the current development of the Conventions on Intangible Heritage and on Cultural Diversity. In Communication, UNESCO is one of the agencies that monitor the right to Freedom of Expression. Much of the outputs of UNESCO come from contributions of data and expertise provided on a voluntary basis (for example the Global Tsunami monitoring system).</p>	

<p>take a lead on girls' education.</p> <p>2c. Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNESCO's science work provides vital input into climate debates. + The Organisation has taken some steps to improve own climate footprint. + The Man and Biosphere programme demonstrates climate sensitive development and education in practice. - Further attention is needed to its own carbon footprint. = UNESCO's contribution to the wider climate debate is important but it should do more on its own housekeeping. 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>
<p>3. Focus on Poor Countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scores for the UN specialised agencies (UNIDO, UNESCO, WHO and ILO) with the exception of FAO are obtained by using a breakdown by country for all specialised agency expenditure. As a group they spend 43% of their resources in the countries in the top quartile of an index that scores developing countries based on their poverty need and effectiveness (the strength of the country's institutions. This is low compared with most of the other multilaterals assessed by this index. - In addition they spend significant resources in middle income countries with low absolute poverty numbers including upper middle income countries. 	<p>Weak (2)</p>
<p>4. Contribution to Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNESCO is well regarded by some partners for the quality of its technical expertise and products. - UNESCO is unable to identify its impact. Systematic results reporting and evaluation is not adequately practiced. - UNESCO is under-delivering significantly in its leadership of the education sector. = UNESCO has poor systems, an inability to identify its results and performs poorly in key sectors. 	<p>Unsatisfactory (1)</p>
<p>Organisational Strengths</p>	<p>Score (1-4)</p>
<p>5. Strategic and Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Senior management are committed to dealing with underperformance within the organisation. - There is a 'permissive mandate' and an over complex results structure. - UNESCO has a cumbersome governing body. - Findings from UNESCO's Independent Evaluation and Audit reports indicate significant weaknesses. = There is a poor results framework, inadequate attention to results in programming decisions and a cumbersome 	<p>Unsatisfactory (1)</p>

Executive Board.	
<p>6. Financial Resources Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNESCO has high quality audits and is implementing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). It has established an Ethics Office. - There are poor allocation mechanisms, inadequate management of poorly performing programmes and poor results in some audits. = There is substantial room for improvement particularly in allocation of resources, timely closure of programmes and dealing with underperformance 	Weak (2)
<p>7. Cost and Value Consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Administration costs have been reduced by 30% although they remain relatively high. - Audits noted that systems introduced for improving administrative procedures were poorly implemented. - The lack of an incentive to ensure the most efficient use of expert time, provided free of cost to the organisation, hampers reductions in transaction costs. = UNESCO pays insufficient attention to transaction costs, has poor results in audits but has achieved efficiency savings. 	Weak (2)
<p>8. Partnership Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + There is evidence of strong partnerships. + There is a constitutional requirement for NGO involvement at local level and broadly good feedback from UK actors. - Tensions with other UN agencies and 'cliquey' behaviour in some sectors have meant that work in some fields has not been as broad based as necessary. - An education portfolio review found poor partnership behaviour in the education sector. = Good partnership behaviour is not uniform across sectors and is particularly problematic in education. 	Weak (2)
<p>9. Transparency and Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + There is broad partner involvement, and a recently established Ethics Office. - There is no presumption of disclosure and a complicated programme information system with limited access to results. = Good accountability is offset by weak transparency. 	Weak (2)
Likelihood of Positive Change	Score (1-4)
10. Likelihood of Positive Change	Uncertain (2)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">+ A new senior team is already setting the right direction. There is a good recent track record of bearing down on costs and improving efficiency.- Historically the Executive Board has underperformed in terms of results management and prioritisation and it is not yet clear that there is sufficient recognition of the need to change.= Although the leadership of UNESCO is initiating positive change, real reform requires impetus from the membership. This has not yet materialised.	
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