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# UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector

**Upholding Information as a Public Good**

Advancing Universal Access, Digital Inclusion  
and Freedom of Expression

# What is UNESCO?

**U**NESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) promotes peace by fostering international collaboration in:



**Education**



**Natural Sciences**



**Social and Human Sciences**



**Culture**



**Communication and Information**

UNESCO's Constitution was adopted very shortly after the Second World War in 1945. Based on the firm belief that peace cannot be achieved only through economic and political agreements between countries, UNESCO brings people together to build intellectual and moral solidarity through mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue.

Its main functions are:



Laboratory of ideas



Standard setting (adoption of declarations, conventions, recommendations)



Clearing house (research, monitoring, awareness raising)



Capacity-building (workshops, online courses, curriculums)



International cooperation

With its Headquarters in Paris, France, UNESCO works with its 194 [Member States](#), 12 Associate Members, [54 field offices](#) and [9 institutes](#).

**+ More information**



<https://www.unesco.org/en>

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# UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector

**UNESCO's Constitution** promotes the 'free flow of ideas by word and image' to advance intercultural understanding and mutual knowledge. Its Communication and Information Sector (CI Sector) empowers key actors to safeguard fundamental human rights, both in online and off-line spaces, focusing on the following fields:

- Freedom of expression and the safety of journalists
- Media development and media in emergency
- Media and information literacy and digital competencies
- Universal access to information and digital inclusion
- Digital policies and digital transformation
- Documentary heritage - Memory of the World programme



# CI Sector and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve everyone's lives. In 2015, all UN Member States endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a 15-year plan to achieve the 17 SDGs. UNESCO helps reach the SDGs through its cross-cutting mission. In the area of communication and information, UNESCO carries out monitoring and reporting of the SDG indicators 16.10.1 and 16.10.2.

**16** PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



**Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

**TARGET 16.10**



**ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS**

**SDG Indicator 16.10.1**  
Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months.

**SDG Indicator 16.10.2**  
Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information.

In addition, the CI Sector contributes to the following:



**SDG 4 QUALITY EDUCATION:**  
by supporting Open Educational Resources (OER) and Media and Information Literacy (MIL).



**SDG 5 GENDER EQUALITY:**  
by promoting the safety of women journalists and gender equality in and through media and in access to information in digital spaces.



**SDG 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE:**  
by fostering digital innovation and transformation.



**SDG 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES:**  
by promoting universal access to information and digital inclusion.



**SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION:**  
by supporting the media reporting on climate change.



**SDG 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS:**  
by promoting freedom of expression, the safety of journalists and media development, advancing access to information laws and building capacities in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the rule of law.



**SDG 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS:**  
through a multistakeholder approach and digital capacity building.

# CI Sector and Gender Equality

**G**ender equality is essential to UNESCO's work and vision. As equal citizens, women and men must have equal opportunities, choices, power and knowledge. UNESCO works to provide citizens with the information, values and skills they need to address gender inequalities. The CI Sector's initiatives for gender equality include:

- ✓ Addressing issues of targeted online and off-line attacks against women journalists. The UNESCO-commissioned report *The Chilling*, based on a survey of over 900 journalists from 125 countries, shows how disinformation, misogyny and discrimination are tightly linked to the sharp rise of online violence against women journalists.
- ✓ Supporting media platforms, such as Radio Begum in Afghanistan, to promote the voices of women.
- ✓ Developing guidelines to assist the media in covering violence against women and girls. (*Reporting on violence against women and girls: A handbook for journalists*, *The Big Conversation: A handbook to address violence against women in and through the media*).
- ✓ Leading discussions on gender equality in and through media at the UN Commission on the Status of Women.
- ✓ Drawing attention to AI's impact on women through publications such as *The Effects of AI on the Working Lives of Women* and *'d Blush If I Could: Closing Gender Divides in Digital Skills through Education*.
- ✓ Promoting women's vital role and achievements in documentary heritage through the project *Women in History* - Telling HERstory through Memory of the World.



**259 million**

more men than women using the Internet in 2022.



NEWS

Only **25%**

of news sources and subjects are women.



**22%**

Women make up only 22% of AI professionals globally.

## + More information



[How to Report Safely: Strategies for Women Journalists & Their Allies](#)



[Promoting Gender Equity in the Right of Access to Information](#)



# CI Sector and Priority Africa

Africa has been a longstanding priority for UNESCO. Recent actions for Africa by the CI Sector include:

- ✓ Trained over 3,000 judicial actors in more than 40 African countries, promoting freedom of expression and the safety of journalists through UNESCO Judges' Initiative.
- ✓ Supporting the creation of [a digital platform on the safety of journalists in Africa](#).
- ✓ [Strengthening journalism schools in Africa](#) with interventions to date in 30 journalism education institutions.
- ✓ Helping 400 community media organizations strengthen editorial freedom, distribution, management and gender equality awareness.
- ✓ Trained over 2,400 African youth and 300 youth organizations through the [Media and Information Literacy \(MIL\) for Youth Civic Engagement](#) project.
- ✓ Supporting the capacity building of information commissioners and establishing an African Network of Information Commissioners.
- ✓ Capacity-building workshops on the UNESCO Open Educational Resources (OER) recommendation in 44 African countries.
- ✓ Advancing [open access to scientific information](#) in 11 African countries.
- ✓ Working with 24 countries in Africa to enrich [UNESCO's World Atlas of Languages](#).

- ✓ [Developing policymakers' capacity](#) to facilitate digital transformation through the [AI Needs Assessment Survey in Africa](#) and the [AI and Digital Transformation Competency Framework for Civil Servants](#).



- ✓ Trained over 400 judicial operators in 43 African countries through an open online course on [AI and the Rule of Law](#).
- ✓ Enhancing public access to ancient manuscripts in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa through preservation and digitisation.
- ✓ Empowering African memory institutions to integrate disaster risk reduction and management into their documentary heritage preservation policies and practices.



of the population (34% of women and 45% of men) use the Internet in Africa.



**23**  
countries

in Africa have access to information laws.





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# Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists

**T**he state of press freedom is still alarming today. Every four days, a journalist is killed somewhere in the world. Killing journalists is the ultimate form of censorship. It is a threat to society as it denies the right of every citizen to access free and independent information.

Aside from the killings, media professionals face risks such as physical assault, arbitrary detention, legal harassment, imprisonment or kidnapping. Women journalists are particularly exposed to gender-based assaults, including misogynistic online harassment. Violence against journalists is also evolving; the number of digital attacks against journalists has increased, as has their sophistication. In recent years, cyber-attacks, hacking, surveillance and online censorship have disrupted the free flow of information online.

The rise of digital technology has also made spreading false information easier. Increasing misinformation and disinformation makes it harder for citizens to find reliable and verified information and harms trust in society.







**85%**

of the world population experienced a decline in press freedom in their country between 2016-2021.



Over **1600**

journalists have been killed since 1993.



**9** out of **10**

of killings of journalists go unpunished.



**73%**

of 625 surveyed women journalists have experienced online violence.

## What are the key challenges?

- Journalists face persistent and complex attacks, creating an unsafe environment for them to work and hindering the development of free and independent media.
- Growing restrictions on free speech and online and off-line attacks are making it harder for journalists to provide people with reliable and verified information.
- Crimes against journalists go widely unpunished.
- Rapid evolution in the digital world makes it difficult to address harmful content online. This has led to the spread of disinformation and hate speech, fuelling discrimination, hostility and violence.
- During elections, widespread misinformation and disinformation often cause division, target specific groups or seek political gain.

## How is UNESCO tackling the issues

- ✓ Raising awareness through coordinating global annual commemorations: [World Press Freedom Day](#) (3 May) and [International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists](#) (2 November).
- ✓ Leading the implementation of the [UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#).
- ✓ Building international coalitions and creating national safety mechanisms to protect journalists in at least 50 countries.
- ✓ Raising awareness of the dangers that women journalists face and empowering stakeholders to tackle these challenges.
- ✓ Monitoring the global state of freedom of expression, journalists' safety and producing evidence-based reporting on trends (SDG Indicator 16.10.1).
- ✓ Training judges, prosecutors, security forces and other key duty bearers and sensitising them to their role in combating impunity for crimes against journalists.
- ✓ Training journalists and media workers on how to protect themselves online and off-line, including psychologically.
- ✓ Producing resources and tools, including safety guidelines, studies on the safety of journalists and training manuals.
- ✓ Supporting journalists in Ukraine to continue their vital work of informing the public in times of conflict.
- ✓ Assisting media outlets and journalists to enhance media resilience, particularly in conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan.
- ✓ Convening a global dialogue to discuss safeguarding freedom of expression and access to information in the context of the governance of digital platforms.

## + More information



[UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists](#)



[UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity](#)



[UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize](#)



[Internet for Trust: Towards Guidelines for regulating digital platforms](#)



[World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Global Report](#)

To counteract the threats on the media, from financial fragility to attacks on press freedom, UNESCO act as a global observer by monitoring the evolution of these trends since 2016.



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# Media Development and Media in Emergency

**F**ree and independent media contribute to pluralism, diversity, openness and inclusion in society - indicators of democracy and good governance. They guarantee freedom of expression and universal access to reliable information in an unrestricted manner.

The term *free media* refers to the absence of censorship, government control or significant external influence that limits media outlets' capacity to report news and express opinions freely. The term *independent media* emphasises editorial independence demonstrating the media's ability to report without bias or outside influence. *Media pluralism* is the reflection of social, cultural and political diversity in media content, involving all social groups and giving them a voice through media. *Community media* focus on local issues, encourage public discussion and are accountable to the communities they serve.

The media's role in providing accurate and up-to-date information is even more important during crises, such as natural disasters, terrorism and conflict. Free, independent and pluralistic media are essential for informing people about facts and solutions and coordinating information during crisis management.





# 50%

In 2019, over 50% of global advertising went to Internet platforms, while only 6% went to newspapers.



Over  
**200**  
million

The media are key in responding to climate-related disasters affecting over 200 million people each year.

## What are the key challenges?

- Digitisation is making traditional media organizations more reliant on public and private funding. This threatens media independence and public trust.
- During a crisis, the economy often takes a big hit, worsening advertising revenue, and leading to media professionals' job losses and newsroom closures.
- Concentrated media ownership may limit diversity of voices, lead to biased reporting, weaken media organizations' role as watchdogs and affect journalists' working conditions.
- Access to information can be disrupted in emergencies, especially affecting vulnerable and marginalised groups and communities.
- Gender equality in the media is stagnating or worsening in many countries.
- The media are underrepresented in global initiatives to address climate change and displacement issues.

## How is UNESCO tackling the issues

- ✓ Improving media plurality, viability and diversity practices and policies through UNESCO [Community Media Sustainability Policy Series](#).
- ✓ Strengthening community media, including Indigenous media, by increasing editorial independence, technical and programming capacity and management.
- ✓ Supporting media development using UNESCO's [Media Development Indicators](#) and the [Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media](#).
- ✓ Promoting [World Radio Day](#) (13 February) and supporting community radio stations.
- ✓ Training media professionals on conflict-sensitive reporting and safety in hostile environments using resources such as [Terrorism and the Media: A Handbook for Journalists](#).
- ✓ Assisting the media in refugee-hosting countries in reporting on refugee issues and ensuring refugees' access to information using [Reporting on Migrants and Refugees: Handbook for Journalism](#) educators and other tools.
- ✓ Promoting gender equality in and through the media.
- ✓ Training media institutions in Africa and South-East Asia to use digital and intelligence tools to monitor climate change and natural hazards, gather news and analyse public data.

## + More information



[Media Development, Pluralism and Diversity](#)



[Media in Crisis Preparedness and Response](#)



**The Windhoek Declaration**, issued at a UNESCO seminar in 1991 encouraging free, independent media and pluralism in the press in Africa, was the first of its kind, confirming the global community's commitment to press freedom. Thirty years later, [Windhoek+30 Declaration](#) was adopted at the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day Global Conference in 2021, recognising information as a public good.



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# Media and Information Literacy and Digital Competencies

**T**oday, citizens, especially young people, are more connected online than ever before. The Internet and social media offer new opportunities for citizens to exchange and access information. However, they have also facilitated the spread of false and harmful content. This calls for Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and strong digital skills that empower citizens to identify reliable information, address hate speech and mis/disinformation and use digital tools for creativity, entrepreneurship and social engagement.

In a world where new technologies are powerful tools for human development, more must be done to help all countries take advantage of the digital transformation, close digital gaps and ensure that all citizens can make informed decisions when participating in democratic processes.





**66.3%** of the world use the Internet.  
**2.7 billion people** remain off-line.



**53.9%** of adults aged 18+ are concerned about what is real or fake on the Internet.



In **50%** of the 78 countries surveyed, less than 28% of individuals have information and data literacy skills.



**2x** The number of social media users doubled from 2016 to 2023.

## What are the key challenges?

- The abundance of information on the Internet has made it difficult to distinguish between accurate and false information.
- The rise of social media has contributed to the increased spread of disinformation and hate speech.
- Technology evolves constantly, making it challenging to keep up with new platforms, tools and techniques.
- A lack of comprehensive and long-term national MIL policies in many countries.
- Pressing need for digital platforms and the media to support and actively promote MIL.
- Inequalities, particularly gender-related and socio-economic factors, frequently worsen gaps in MIL and digital skills.

## How is UNESCO tackling the issues

- ✓ Assisting governments and institutions in developing national MIL policies and strategies.
- ✓ Developing action plans and strategies for digital platforms, the media, youth organizations and libraries to integrate MIL into their policies, operations and products.
- ✓ Training policymakers, educators and other duty bearers on MIL and digital skills.
- ✓ Supporting education systems to integrate MIL and digital skills into their curricula.
- ✓ Developing standards, recommendations, educational curricula and online courses on MIL and digital skills.
- ✓ Raising awareness through the annual Global Media and Information Literacy Week (24-31 October).
- ✓ Stimulating innovative approaches through the UNESCO Media and Information Cities (MIL Cities) initiative.

## + More information



[Media and Information Literacy](#)



[Digital Competencies and Skills](#)



[MIL Massive Open Online Courses](#)



### **Media and Information Literacy: The Time to Act is Now!**

This brochure introduces the UNESCO MIL curriculum [Media and Information Literate Citizens: think critically, click wisely!](#) which is being adapted and piloted in 97 educational institutions in 9 countries on 5 continents.



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# Universal Access to Information and Digital Inclusion

**T**he right to access information, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is an essential component of a democratic society. UNESCO promotes access to reliable information so that citizens can make informed decisions and hold their governments accountable.

Technological advancements have improved access to information but have also created new forms of exclusion and inequalities. To enable governments to disclose information and citizens to exercise their right to information and demand better governance and public services, structural and political barriers must be addressed. It is also necessary to overcome digital gaps, particularly those affecting vulnerable groups. Language barriers, for example, continue to make it difficult for indigenous language users to obtain the information they need.

UNESCO supports inclusive Internet and digital technology policy development based on human rights, openness, accessibility and multistakeholder participation.



Only **5%** of the world's languages are present on the Internet.



Around **40%** of the 7,000 languages used worldwide are at risk of disappearing.



**137** UN Member States have adopted legal framework guaranteeing public access to information.



## What are the key challenges?

- Limited accessibility to suitable online content due to factors such as age, gender, digital literacy and affordability.
- Strengthening the implementation of right to information legislative frameworks requires considerable financial resources and political will.
- Open Educational Resources (OER) require sustained investments in their creation, curation and regular updating to ensure inclusive and effective access.
- Information is often only available in certain languages. Indigenous users still face language barriers to accessing information both online and off-line.
- Internet shutdowns and slowdowns infringe people's right to access information and cause economic losses.

## + More information



[Right to Information](#)



**UNESCO World Atlas of Languages** (WAL) contains various aspects and status of over 2,000 languages.



**Open Solutions**, such as OER, Open Access to Scientific Information, Free and Open-Source Software and Open Data, can facilitate the free flow of information and knowledge. UNESCO assists Member States in incorporating OER practices into policies and initiatives.

## How is UNESCO tackling the issues

- ✓ [Monitoring and reporting on public access to information](#) legislation and assisting countries in tracking progress (SDG indicator 16.10.2) in its implementation.
- ✓ Leading the annual celebration of the [International Day for Universal Access to Information](#) (28 September).
- ✓ Promoting guidelines to support Member States in the development of frameworks pertaining to Open Data and Open Data for AI.
- ✓ Building capacity with tools such as the [online course on access to information laws and policies](#).
- ✓ Promoting the [UNESCO Recommendation on OER](#) for lifelong learning and making knowledge accessible through networks such as the [OER Dynamic Coalition](#).
- ✓ Using the [UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers](#), supporting countries incorporate teacher ICT competency policies and standards into education planning.
- ✓ Supporting multilingualism and linguistic diversity through the UNESCO [2003 Recommendation on the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace](#) and the [World Atlas of Languages](#).
- ✓ Leading the [International Decade of Indigenous Languages \(2022-2032\)](#) to promote multilingualism and linguistic diversity.



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# Digital Policies and Digital Transformation

**D**igital transformation is increasingly impacting every part of our lives. Digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain and the Internet of Things are transforming our societies. These frontier technologies present opportunities for human progress and inclusive knowledge societies but have also introduced significant challenges.

Many countries struggle to ensure inclusive technology development which respects human rights, gender equality, openness, accessibility and multistakeholder participation. To address potential risks associated with digital transformation, regulatory and legislative capacity-building frameworks must be updated. UNESCO works to close the digital divide, strengthen digital governance and policies, build human and institutional capacity and lead discussions on issues related to the rapid development of technology from a human rights perspective.





**47%** of countries worldwide do not have a strategy to improve digital skills in the public sector.



**90%** of judicial operators surveyed said they need legal training on AI systems.



Over **5400** judicial operators in 140 countries trained by UNESCO on AI and the Rule of Law.



USD **524 billion** Closing the digital gender gap represents a USD 524 billion opportunity for policymakers over the next five years.

## What are the key challenges?

- Digital exclusion may become irreversible, raising risks for people, particularly women and girls in emerging economies, who may miss out on the benefits and opportunities to actively participate in digital transformation processes.
- As digital technology evolves rapidly, digital governance gaps are widening. These gaps have raised privacy and security issues through increasing surveillance, data mining and profiling.
- A lack of investment in public sector capacity to manage digital transformation is hindering digital governance and transformation worldwide.
- Countries, organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector must collaborate to close the digital governance cooperation gap. Current efforts only partially address the key challenges.
- Algorithms and generative AI systems are influenced by the data they are trained on. The AI system will reflect data biases, which can perpetuate or amplify discrimination and unfairness.

## How is UNESCO tackling the issues

- ✓ Foresight, monitoring and addressing potential risks of new technologies and [missing links in their governance](#), as well as developing rights-based standards to help ensure a human-centred approach to their application.
- ✓ Raising awareness, conducting research on the digital gender gap and contributing to promoting women professionals in AI.
- ✓ Supporting national assessments and follow-up action on Internet development using UNESCO's Internet Universality framework based on human rights (R), openness (O), inclusive access (A) and Multistakeholder (M) participation (ROAM-X) principles.
- ✓ Providing digital transformation capacity-building programmes for policymakers and the judiciary.
- ✓ Promoting multistakeholder-driven digital governance through [guidelines on policy processes](#) that are inclusive, transparent and accountable.
- ✓ Facilitating digital cooperation through international initiatives and mechanisms, such as the World Summit on the Information Society, the Internet Governance Forum, the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development and the UN Global Digital Compact.

## + More information



[Artificial Intelligence and the Rule of Law](#)



[Massive Open Online Course: AI and the Rule of Law](#)



[Micro-lessons: Defending Human Rights in the Age of AI](#)



### Digital Capacity-Building for Governments

The development and use of digital technologies are impacting how governments function. Digital transformation has become one of the highest priorities for governments. The framework [AI and Digital Transformation: Competencies for Civil Servants](#) guides public sector actors to enhance their digital capacities.



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# Documentary Heritage - Memory of the World Programme

**D**ocumentary heritage is an essential part of humanity's collective memory. It is a vital resource that helps us learn from the past. Documentary heritage and archives reflect critical aspects of societies worldwide - their cultures, traditions, languages, history, technology and science. Preserving these items is key to understanding our origins and shaping our future.

The [UNESCO Memory of the World programme](#) was established in 1992 to preserve some of the world's most significant records of the past and make them accessible to everyone. These include manuscripts, photographs, maps, inscriptions, films, digital files and audiovisual media. In other words, our shared past both ancient and modern.

Inscription on the Memory of the World Register publicly affirms the importance of documentary heritage, makes it more widely known and provides greater access to it, facilitating research, education, entertainment and preservation over time.





**496** inscriptions on the [Memory of the World International Register](#) (as of September 2023).



**40** out of **63** memory institutions surveyed did not have an emergency management plan.

## What are the key challenges?

- Many documentary heritage items, such as old manuscripts, photographs and audiovisual recordings can be fragile and can easily be lost, damaged or intentionally destroyed.
- The risks associated with the preservation of documentary heritage are particularly heightened during times of crisis, such as conflicts and natural disasters.
- Preserving documentary heritage requires significant resources, including funding, staff, storage space and equipment. Many institutions need more resources to preserve and protect their collections adequately.
- Providing access to documentary heritage materials while respecting copyright laws and privacy concerns can be a complex challenge.
- Highlighting documentary heritage from Africa and other under-represented regions.
- Identifying and highlighting documentary heritage relevant to women's roles and achievements in history.

## How is UNESCO tackling the issues

- ✓ Raising awareness of the significance of documentary heritage through inscriptions on UNESCO's Memory of the World International Register.
- ✓ Celebrating the annual [World Day for Audiovisual Heritage](#) (27 October).
- ✓ Promoting digital preservation of documentary heritage for long-term preservation and access.
- ✓ Building capacities of archives, museums and libraries to support disaster risk reduction and to respond to crises effectively.



Palm-Leaf Manuscripts of Phra That Phanom Chronicle © National Library of Thailand

## + More information



[Memory of the World International Register](#)



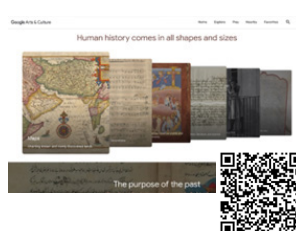
[2015 Recommendation Concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage, Including in Digital Form](#)



[UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize](#)



The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chair Archives at the Service of African Nations and Societies was established in 2023 to address the challenges that African archives face. The Chair aims to enhance the capacity of higher education institutions in Africa and to promote an integrated system of research, teaching and training for archive preservation and accessibility.



A selection of the Memory of the World International Register items is available on [Google Arts & Culture](#). Discover stories from around the world that have shaped humanity's shared past, taking a variety of forms, ranging from ancient manuscripts to photography to sheet music and stone carvings.



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# Intergovernmental Programmes

**C**I Sector leverages two intergovernmental programmes to advance its areas of expertise and to reach its cross-cutting strategic goals.

## The Information for All Programme (IFAP)

Established in 2001, the Information for All Programme (IFAP) fosters international cooperation to build inclusive, equitable and sustainable knowledge societies. It supports UNESCO Member States in developing and implementing national information policies and knowledge strategies to meet the needs of an increasingly technology-dependent world.

IFAP's Intergovernmental Council, comprising 26 UNESCO Member States, and its six working groups of over 90 international experts collaborate to develop policies and share knowledge to promote the right to information for all. The Programme focuses on six priority areas, which are: Information for development, Information literacy, Information ethics, Information preservation, Information accessibility and Multilingualism.

### What are the key challenges?

- A lack of digital policies and frameworks that hinder both opportunities and risk management associated with emerging digital technologies.
- A lack of access to information, particularly for marginalized and excluded populations.
- Document repositories face difficulties protecting information that is kept in outdated formats.
- Barriers to internet access, including the lack of languages online and unequal digital skills distribution.

### How is UNESCO tackling the issues

- ✓ Promoting principles and policies for knowledge societies into digital transformation processes.
- ✓ Fostering information-literate societies through knowledge-sharing and collaboration.
- ✓ Developing policies and approaches to safeguard documents held by information repositories.
- ✓ Building capacities and facilitating discussions on ethical, legal and human rights issues arising from frontier digital technologies.
- ✓ Strengthening universal access to information and promoting privacy safeguards, open access and universal design principles.
- ✓ Incorporating multilingualism in cyberspace as a core component of digital inclusion strategies.

### + More information



[Information for All Programme \(IFAP\)](#)

# The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)

IPDC is the only multilateral forum in the UN system designed to mobilise the international community around media development. Since 1980, IPDC has been providing direct support to projects on the ground and leadership in setting and monitoring international standards. The programme places emphasis on the gender dimensions of media development and focuses particularly on Africa, least developed countries and Small Island Developing States.

The IPDC Intergovernmental Council, made up of 39 UNESCO Member States, acts as a laboratory for ideas on emerging issues and plays a key role in promoting, monitoring and reporting on safety of journalists and access to information.

## What are the key challenges?

- A lack of opportunities for the development of free, independent and pluralistic media, particularly in countries that are overlooked by major donor-driven projects.
- Various crises, conflicts and natural disasters require an immediate response.
- There is a crucial need to establish clear standards to effectively guide the media development, especially when dealing with new challenges.
- Independent media outlets face financial challenges, particularly due to the growing influence of big tech companies.
- Failing to uphold high professional journalistic standards hampers the media's ability to promote democracy, facilitating dialogue and ensuring accountability.

Over **40** years of support and dialogue



USD **115** million channeled to development worldwide



**2200** projects approved and supported in over **140** countries of implementation



## How is UNESCO tackling the issues

- ✓ Responding to the needs of local grassroots organizations through the IPDC annual project proposal call, with special attention given to gender equality.
- ✓ Addressing emerging crises through its rapid response mechanism.
- ✓ Enabling innovative and expert thinking regarding journalists' safety. IPDC has developed a mechanism to monitor and report on the safety of journalists and initiated the creation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.
- ✓ Supporting knowledge-based tools such as the Indicators on [Media Development](#), [Journalists' Safety](#), [Media Viability](#) and [Internet Universality](#).
- ✓ Supporting research, sharing good practices and developing recommendations to address media viability challenges.
- ✓ Providing journalism schools with a range of cutting-edge resources and practical tools to assist journalism educators in providing essential skills to the next generation of media professionals, while addressing challenging topics such as migration, gender equality, terrorism and disinformation.

## + More information



[International Programme for the Development of Communication \(IPDC\)](#)



[Media Viability Initiative](#)



[UNESCO's Journalism Education Series](#)





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# Our Partners

17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



UNESCO's approach to partnership is firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda. At its heart lies Sustainable Development Goal #17 Partnerships for the Goals. The Organization relies on a vast and diverse network of partners to pursue its mission and implement its programmes.

UNESCO's partners include the United Nations Development System, key groups such as young people, cities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and 'UNESCO family partners' including UNESCO Clubs, UNESCO Chairs and the UNITWIN Network, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors and UNESCO category 2 centres and institutes. UNESCO National Commissions are governmental partners for outreach, engagement and amplifying messages about UNESCO's vision and mission at the national level.

In addition, UNESCO benefits enormously from the inputs of implementing partners, including ministries, specialized agencies, regional human rights courts, international judicial and police associations, media networks, universities, research entities and more.

## Pooled Funding Mechanisms

The CI Sector's funding modalities consist of a regular budget, UN-administrated funds, single donor funds-in-trust, multi-donor special accounts and multi-partner trust funds such as:

- **Global Media Defence Fund (GMDF)** is a multi-partner trust fund that supports the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. It helps reinforce the legal defence of journalists, ensure judicial follow-up, hold offenders accountable for crimes against journalists and promote free, independent and pluralistic media.
- **The Information for All Programme (IFAP)** provides a framework for international cooperation to build inclusive and sustainable knowledge societies.
- **The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)** supports grassroots projects and develops norms and standards to foster a healthy environment for free and pluralistic press growth.
- **Multi-donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP)** strengthens UNESCO's work by channelling funds towards the most pressing needs to promote freedom of expression, media development, pluralism and diversity, media crisis preparedness and response, and media and information literacy.





# Thanks to our donors

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FAO, ILO, the UN, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, WFP, WHO.



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