



The General History of Africa

A UNESCO Flagship Programme for Operational Strategy

Priority Africa

UNESCO's Flagship Programme the "General History of Africa (GHA) as a catalyst for achieving Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda" is an intersectoral initiative aimed at contributing to improving Africa's education systems, strengthening knowledge production, and raising awareness of the General History of Africa narratives within Africa, the diaspora and the world.

What?






As part of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2022 – 2029), the General History of Africa (GHA) Flagship Programme responds to the challenge of reconstructing Africa and its diaspora historical memory and conscience by revisiting Eurocentric and colonial biases in the representation of their history and societies. It aims to advance a common identity and pride in Africa's heritage, progress towards greater justice and an inclusive and fair future through the reappropriation and production of knowledge on Africa and its diaspora history in a manner that could contribute to the transformation of education in Africa and beyond.

The GHA is aligned with the African Union Agenda 2063, *The Africa We Want*, the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

By whom?

The GHA is an intersectoral UNESCO Flagship Programme, co-led by the Education and Social and Human Sciences Sectors, with contribution from the Culture and Communication and Information Sectors and support and coordination by the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector (PAX). To achieve its goals, the programme builds on the competencies of UNESCO's Programme Sectors and relevant specialized institutes such as the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL).

Why?

-  The programme responds to the African Union (AU) Members' request to continue to produce knowledge on Africa and its diaspora history, raise awareness on African narratives, and to integrate the GHA into education systems across the continent.
-  It is necessary to overcome a long legacy of epistemic injustice towards the African continent, and the GHA contributes to Africa's emancipation from long-standing prejudices and misrepresentations and, therefore enhancing a sense of pride, self-esteem, and self-confidence of younger generations of Africans and people of African descent.
-  Education systems worldwide need to be equitable and inclusive to foster a culture of peace. The GHA embraces and promotes these principles of reciprocal knowledge, solidarity, cultural respect, and appreciation of diverse heritage in, and through education. This helps advance the "UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development".

How?



The programme consists of three interconnected components:

1. Transforming education through the teaching and learning of the GHA

It entails supporting countries mainstream the GHA into education systems through curricula, pedagogy and teacher education and development in Africa and beyond.

2. Strengthening knowledge production on Africa and its diaspora history

The knowledge production consists of publishing three new volumes that update the first eight volumes, integrate the history of African diasporas into that of the continent, and analyze the challenges facing Africa and its diasporas. It further contributes to the production of new knowledge on Africa and its diaspora history to address contemporary social challenges by building partnerships with universities, research centres and institutes, while also developing the capacities of young researchers to participate in that process.

3. Lifelong learning and outreach

The GHA is implemented through non-formal and informal education, reaching out to different audiences through different modalities and platforms. In this context, artists (humorists, filmmakers, playwrights, etc.) are mobilized across the world to bring the key messages of the GHA to the public at large, in particular the youth.

Background



The GHA project was initiated by UNESCO in 1964 and created within a long-term perspective. It is the fruit of collaboration by a team of approximately 350 Africanist scholars and intellectuals from across the globe, working together over the past six decades. Guided by a 39-member International Scientific Committee, two-thirds of whom were Africans, the project resulted in the production of a pioneering work offering a comprehensive African perspective on the continent's history and its contributions to the general progress of humanity.

In 2017 and 2018, African Ministers of Education, along with the Executive Council of the African Union (AU) advocated for the GHA's integration into national curricula, across education systems across the continent. In 2021, UNESCO Member States adopted the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2022-2029), identifying the GHA as one of the pivotal elements for advancing the continent's developmental goals, and therefore designated it as one its five Flagship Programmes. African leaders further underscored the significance of the GHA to education systems reforms across the continent during the Transforming Education Summit at the UN in 2022.

About UNESCO

With 194 Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization contributes to peace and security by leading multilateral cooperation on education, science, culture, communication and information. Headquartered in Paris, UNESCO has offices in 54 countries and employs over 2300 people. UNESCO oversees more than 2000 World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks; networks of Creative, Learning, Inclusive and Sustainable Cities; and over 13 000 associated schools, university chairs, training and research institutions. Its Director-General is Audrey Azoulay.



"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

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