Study Guide for UNESCO at MUN Flensburg 2023

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Dear Participant,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the upcoming conference of MUN Flensburg. As you may already know, the aim of this conference is to simulate how the United Nations operates, providing a platform for delegates to engage in constructive dialogue and exchange of ideas regarding global issues. Furthermore, you will be challenged to think critically and creatively as you work towards finding solutions to some of the world's most pressing issues.

You belong to an outstanding group of participants representing countries and organisations from all over the world, and we are confident that your contribution will add significant value to the conference. We encourage you to engage in the discussions with an open mind and to actively participate in your committee.

We have organised a comprehensive program that will offer you opportunities to learn from experts in various fields, engage in meaningful debates, and network with other delegates. The conference promises to be an exciting and rewarding experience.

To help you with your preparation for the conference the chairs and us have written guides for the topic "Possibilities of Remote Education" and "Balancing Representation in World Heritage Sites". They give you a solid introduction to the topic and the problems connected to it. Some terms in the study guide are marked in bold. The explanation to these terms can be found in the glossary of the respective study guide. Furthermore, we want to encourage you to use the study guides as a jumping off point for your own research.

If at any point you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us through our email address (academic-content@mun-flensburg.de).

We look forward to seeing you at MUN Flensburg 2023 and are excited about the valuable contributions you will make.
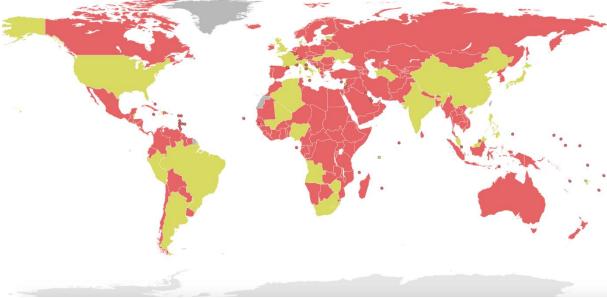
Best regards,

Paula Barredo, Annick Poirot and Aral Sezgin (Secretariat of MUN Flensburg 2023)

1. Introduction to UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was created in 1945 as the United Nations' body with the aim to bolster international collaboration and secure peace on the basis of "moral and intellectual solidarity". UNESCO's goals reach from providing education to all children on earth, and fostering international scientific collaboration, to protecting cultural heritage, supporting cultural diversity, and protecting freedom of expression. Just like the entire United Nations system, UNESCO was created as a response to two devastating World Wars, with the aim to secure peace and security on the basis of international collaboration. The Organization has 193 Members and 12 Associate Members. Each member has one vote in UNESCO's General Conference that is held every two years in order to set the organization's budgets and evaluate the contributions of each member to live up to the goals set by the agency.

UNESCO aims to be a leader in its fields of competence and has the goal and aspiration to set the global agenda in all issues related to global educational, scientific and cultural matters. The committee's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

For this year's conference, the following delegations will be in session:
Participating countries map (colored in yellow)

https://www.geograf.in/world-color.php

2. Letter from Chair

Dear Delegates,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to Flensburg MUN. My name is Khuslen Tulga and I will be your chair of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) committee. Serving as your chair gives me the opportunity to lead and encourage delegates to rise above themselves in a formal diplomatic debate. MUN opens doors to politics, international affairs, diversity and into the future we create. It's your turn to voice your opinion on an international floor to young individuals like yourself. Keep in mind that MUN is not for aspiring diplomats only, it allows us to celebrate diplomacy, practice tolerance and have mutual respect for all on an international floor. I am excited to meet all of you and hopefully guide you successfully through the three-day conference.

Both topics of UNESCO – "Towards a Balanced Representation of World Heritage Sites" and "Possibilities for Remote Education"– are of great significance for the global community. We are excited to hear all of your input on these pressing issues and hope that all of you will live the MUN spirit of collaboration and dedication in order to reach a strong resolution on the topics.

To give a small insight into my experience with MUN, I participated in English and International School MUNs back in my hometown Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Both times I participated in the ECOSOC Committee throughout 2017-2018. Delegating for South Korea and Iraq and earning the "Best Delegate" and "Commendation" awards respectively. And it is an immense honor to return as a chair to UNESCO at Flensburg MUN. From all of the activities I have tried out in the past years, MUN still holds a dear place in my heart, as it enlightened me with so many new perspectives on lifelong friendships and many more sets of skills in various areas.

Lastly, I sincerely hope that Flensburg MUN would be a joyful experience for everyone, not only will you represent an entire country and learn a whole new world of diplomacy, you will get to build strong relationships with your peers. I genuinely hope and will work to make Flensburg MUN and UNESCO an enriching experience for you.

Looking forward to see all of you,
Best of luck,
Khuslen Tulga

3. The Possibilities of Remote Education

3.1   Background

In October 2020, Heads of State and Government, Ministers and representatives of the international education community met at the extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM), in response to the urgent call to protect education suffering from the worldwide school closures and the constrained fiscal environment as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic; and to promote education as a catalytic force for inclusive recovery and sustainable development. The 2020 GEM, convened by UNESCO with the Governments of Ghana, Norway and the United Kingdom, reached a global agreement (2020 GEM Declaration) on the commitment to protect education finance and to implement priority actions needed to build more resilient, flexible, inclusive and gender-responsive societies and education systems. The 2020 GEM Declaration consists of two sets of the international community's commitment. First, the commitment to protect education finance included three measures: a) increase or maintain the share of public expenditure on education towards at least 4-6% of GDP and/or 15-20% of public expenditure; b) ensure that national recovery stimulus packages include allocations for equity-focused support measures and for skills development; and c) to increase the volume (ref. 0.7% of donor GNP for Official Development Aid (ODA) to developing countries), predictability and effectiveness of international aid to education. Second, the following four priority actions were agreed upon:

1) **Safely re-open educational institutions** through closer inter-sectoral collaboration, strengthening and restoring access to services and ensuring that reopening plans are equity-oriented, gender-responsive, inclusive, targeted and adequately funded.

2) **Support all teachers and education personnel** as frontline workers, ensuring their safety, well-being and decent working conditions; consulting their representatives in decision-making; and providing them with urgent professional development.

3) **Invest in skills development**, including social and emotional learning and well-being, for inclusive recovery, decent work, enhanced employability and sustainable development.

4) **Narrow the digital divide in education**, develop quality open educational resources and build digital commons as a complement to face-to-face learning.

The 2020 GEM also triggered a dialogue about improving the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism as a means to support countries to accelerate their progress toward SDG 4, recovering from the COVID-19-affected context. Many have called for stronger policy leadership, better synergies, greater efficiency and improved delivery in global and regional cooperation as the response to these goals and challenges.

When monitoring education finance globally, the international community usually refers to the Education 2030 Agenda benchmarks of at least four to six per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and/or 15 to 20 per cent of public expenditure being allocated to education. It also refers to meeting the benchmark of 0.7 per cent of donor gross national income (GNI) for official development assistance. Other areas of policy discussion have also recently emerged, including changes in domestic taxation, innovative financing, the role of employers, and the role of philanthropy in supporting public education.

The Declaration of the 2020 Global Education Meeting (GEM) co-hosted with the governments of Ghana, Norway and the United Kingdom, recalled the importance of education financing. Countries committed to increasing or maintaining the share of their public expenditure dedicated to education to meet international benchmarks, and ensuring that their national recovery stimulus packages include

allocations for education. The declaration also recognized the importance of international efforts and solidarity through the provision of development aid.

3.2 Current Situation

Since 2019 the possibilities of remote education have been highly discussed and criticised. The breaking point for the traditional ways of teaching was, if considered globally, the Covid-19 pandemic. With the pandemic, discussions on remote education became frequent. This meant a swift change to ensure that all of the pupils and students received an uninterrupted education during the transition period to remote education. The transition, however, did not happen as smoothly as possible as possibilities and opportunities for such a transition were and are not equal around the globe. According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report in 2022, 127 million children have missed over half of in-person instruction. Access to the internet and computer ownership per household is one of the reasons explaining the difficult path to remote education. Remote education is related to the fourth SDG "Quality Education". Promoting life learning opportunities, and inclusive and equitable quality education is its main concern. Only by realising its potential may we get one step closer to the fourth SDG aim. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) deals with such problems: documenting, advising, and initiating programs and development goals on education.

By September 2021, schools were fully open in 117 countries compared to 94 in September 2020. Schools were partially open in 41 countries compared to 52 in 2020 and closed in 17 countries versus 41. According to UNESCO, since the onset of the pandemic, schools have been completely closed for an average of 18 weeks (4.5 months) worldwide. If partial closures are factored in (i.e. closures for certain localities and/or educational levels), then across the globe, schools were shut for an average duration of 34 weeks (8.5 months) or nearly a full academic year.

3.3 Problems and approaches to solving

Despite the enormous efforts made, remote learning has proven less effective than face-to-face learning and students spend less time on learning as they are facing a lack of an appropriate physical environment and technical equipment, increased anxiety and mental stress. In order to mitigate the learning loss caused by the pandemic-induced educational disruption, some countries adjusted the subjects taught and reduced the exam content or number of questions, or provided more options regarding the topics for students to work on. For instance, in France, students passing the upper-secondary school leaving exams (Baccalauréat) could choose from four subjects instead of three for the written part of the philosophy exams. Estonia dropped the research paper or practical work project from the list of mandatory components for passing the upper secondary exam. In Germany, the federal states agreed to provide more time for exams, to reduce the content and to adapt the content to the actual curricula at school. In Poland, the oral exams were dropped for all exams at the lower and upper secondary Background document 55 levels. Moreover, the United Kingdom and Ireland applied an alternative grading system while in the Netherlands, lower and upper-secondary students had the possibility to retake one exam in core topics. In the Caribbean countries that participate in the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), the passing requirements were reduced by up to 50% in some subjects.

Financing issues in education predate the COVID-19 pandemic, but the health and economic crisis has exacerbated the situation. The world is now even further away from achieving SDG 4. In addition to a gap in the volume of financing, there are also concerns about the effectiveness of resource use in education, including for equity, quality and efficiency. It is necessary to close these

gaps through a set of policy measures for the short and medium-to-long term in the context of both development and recovery from the crisis.

3.4   Guiding Questions

To discuss how remote education can support progress on SDG4 the following questions should be taken into consideration in the committee discussion:

● What is the current situation of access to remote education?

● Issues with engagement, participation, and attendance

● On what teaching level (Higher Education, primary school etc.) is it most effective? Is remote education also a good possibility in adult education?

● How can students or pupils with specific needs (students with attention issues or disabilities) be included in remote education?

● Under which conditions should remote education be made available? How can remote education be assured for every household (governmental initiatives and/or local (municipal) initiatives)? What are the external requirements, i.e. what do we require for providing such a demand, and partnerships among countries and companies?

● Should governments' strategies focus on making remote education possible when in-person education is not possible or should it be a continuous form of education?

● The teachers' point of view, what software should be used, how can teachers be involved in the development of remote education strategies?

● Possibilities of remote education for minorities, refugees and people living in the diaspora; For scattered minorities, it might not always be possible to get education in their minority language, e.g. Roma and Sinti and Danish minorities. How can remote education be used to enable this? In the case of refugees: is remote education a possibility for them to get an education in their mother tongue so that they don't miss out on education? Example: Ukrainian refugees who often attend remote classes taught by Ukrainian teachers.

3.5   Glossary

Distance learning "is a mode of delivering education or training programmes remotely. It does not require a simultaneous interaction between the teacher/trainer and the learner. Also known as e-learning or online learning, it is a form of education in which teachers and students are physically separated" (UNESCO, TVET).

3.6   Optional Reading

- "UNESCO Survey on Remote Working and Schooling leads to new Training Opportunities for Educators" (2022) https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-survey-remote-working-and-schooling-leads-new-training-opportunities-educators
- "UNESCO education strategy 2014-2021" (2014) https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000231288
- Official List of Member States in UNESCO: https://www.unesco.org/en/countries#:~:text=Membership%20of%20UNESCO%20is%20governed,right%20to%20membership%20of%20UNESCO

- Gamage, K. (2021, August 16). Learning Remotely during a Pandemic. In *Encyclopedia*. https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/13214
- UNESCO-UNEVOC's TVETipedia Glossary. "It is a collection of more than 1,000 terms that are relevant in the area of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)". https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+more+information&context=

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United Nations. (2021). Recovering lost learning: what can be done quickly and at scale? https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377841

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UNESCO; TVET. TVETipedia Glossary. https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary/lang=en/show=term/term=Distance+learning

4. Balancing Representation in World Heritage Sites

4.1   Introduction

The notion of global heritage is significant because it recognises and attempts to safeguard cultural and natural assets that are seen to be of exceptional importance to humanity. However, there is an imbalance in the representation of global heritage sites, with certain parts of the world having many more sites than others.

World Heritage Sites (WHS) are places of considerable cultural, historical, or natural significance that have been designated as having exceptional universal value by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Since the World Heritage Convention was established in 1972, UNESCO has recognised over 1,100 WHS in more than 160 countries.

The designation of a place as a World Heritage place confers prestige and tourist advantages on the country, and as a result, governments frequently seek to have their monuments recognised by UNESCO. However, the process of recognising and safeguarding global Heritage Sites has been criticised for favouring a Western-centric approach to history and culture, ignoring non-Western civilizations' viewpoints and contributions to global heritage.

The Western-centric approach to World Heritage Sites (WHS) has resulted in neglecting the intangible cultural heritage of non-Western cultures, with most recognized sites being located in Europe and North America. This perpetuates an incomplete understanding of world heritage and exacerbates resource imbalances in preserving cultural heritage. UNESCO has recognized the need for a more balanced representation of WHS, adopting the Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible World Heritage List in 1994. UNESCO has also established regional representation on the World Heritage Committee, encouraging countries to nominate sites from under-represented regions of the world.

4.2   The Western-Centric Approach to World Heritage Sites

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated some locations as World Heritage Sites (WHS) because they are thought to have "outstanding universal value" and are important to all of mankind. However, the process of designating and protecting WHS has come under fire for favouring a history- and culture-centric Western perspective while ignoring non-Western civilizations' opinions and contributions to global heritage. The number of sites that have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List as of 2021 is 1,154. Africa and the Pacific have the fewest locations of these, whereas more than half of them are found in Europe and North America. There are various issues with this imbalanced representation of world heritage sites. First, it maintains the idea that some parts of the globe are more valuable or significant than others, which can exacerbate inequality and marginalisation. Second, it may restrict the cultural and economic

advantages of having a place designated as a global heritage site, since nations with fewer sites may lose out on tourism and other possibilities.

The decision to designate the Great Barrier Reef in Australia as a World Heritage Site is one of the most obvious examples of UNESCO's Western-centric strategy. While the Great Barrier Reef is unquestionably a notable natural site, other large coral reef systems throughout the world have been overlooked as a result of its selection. For instance, the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean is home to some of the world's largest coral reefs, yet they do not enjoy the same amount of protection or attention as the Great Barrier Reef.
The designation of Versailles Palace in Paris as a World Heritage Site is another illustration of UNESCO's Western-centric perspective. While Versailles Palace is unquestionably a crucial cultural site, other equally important cultural sites in other regions of the world have been overlooked as a result of its selection. In contrast to Versailles Palace, the ancient city of Timbuktu in Mali has not gained the same degree of preservation or recognition despite having a rich history and culture that merits UNESCO's attention.

The Western-centric approach to WHS is also reflected in the criteria used to evaluate sites. The criteria for recognition of WHS are based on a Eurocentric understanding of history and culture, with an emphasis on monuments, buildings, and sites that reflect the achievements of Western civilization. This has led to the neglect of cultural heritage from all the developing and underdeveloped nations of the world, which is an important aspect of many non-Western cultures. For example, the recognition of dance, music, and oral traditions as part of world heritage has been limited. The Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya, for example, which is home to the Maasai people, has not been recognised a World Heritage Site. The Maasai people have a rich cultural legacy that is threatened by western development and other circumstances, but it has not received the attention it needs from UNESCO.

The causes for this unequal representation are varied and multifaceted. First, the application process itself may be challenging and time-consuming, necessitating substantial resources and experience. Some nations may lack the capacity to finish the application procedure or may be unwilling to do so due to the expenses and time required. As a result, underrepresented regions may be less likely to propose sites for World Heritage designation, and hence less likely to be recognised and protected. Second, the process of considering nominations for World Heritage designation is quite competitive. Each year, a huge number of nominations are submitted for review, and only a tiny fraction of them are finally inscribed on the World Heritage List. Finally, owing to Eurocentric values and practices, the cultural and natural criteria for World Heritage classification may favour specific sorts of sites or areas, which might lead to a bias towards certain types of sites or locations. For example, there has historically been a bias towards monumental architecture, which is more widespread in Europe, while less attention has been paid to other forms of cultural assets, such as intangible cultural heritage or indigenous cultural landscapes. Furthermore, natural heritage sites have been appraised using Western scientific standards, which may not be appropriate in other parts of the world.

In conclusion, UNESCO has received criticism for its Western-centric selection and preservation of the world's most important cultural and natural assets, despite the organisation's excellent efforts in this area. This prejudice has led to the marginalisation of indigenous civilizations and their cultural heritage sites as well as the neglect of significant non-Western cultural and natural areas. To address this, UNESCO must take a more all-encompassing stance that recognises the importance of cultural and natural monuments from all corners of the globe.

4.3   The Need for a Balanced Representation in World Heritage Sites

The over-representation of Western sites on the list of WHS is a concern because it perpetuates a narrow and incomplete understanding of world heritage. A more balanced representation of sites from different regions of the world would provide a more comprehensive and diverse understanding of human history and culture. This would also help to redress the imbalance in the distribution of resources for the preservation of world heritage. Non-Western countries have fewer resources to devote to the preservation of their cultural heritage, and recognition of their sites as WHS would help to ensure their preservation.

A more balanced representation of world heritage sites would also help to promote cultural diversity and understanding. The recognition of the contributions of non-Western cultures to world heritage would help to promote a more inclusive understanding of human history and culture. This would promote respect for cultural diversity and help to reduce the potential for conflict between different cultures.

4.4   Efforts by UNESCO to Achieve a Balanced Representation

UNESCO has taken several efforts to achieve a balanced representation of World Heritage Sites (WHS) around the world. One of the main initiatives is the Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible World Heritage List, adopted in 1994. This strategy aims to address the imbalance in the distribution of WHS by encouraging countries to nominate sites from underrepresented regions of the world. The Global Strategy also encourages the identification and preservation of intangible cultural heritage, as well as the inclusion of sites that reflect cultural diversity and human creativity.

Another effort is the establishment of a system of regional representation on the World Heritage Committee. The committee is composed of 21 members elected by the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, and it includes representatives from different regions of the world. The composition of the committee is reviewed periodically to ensure a balanced representation of different regions.

In addition, UNESCO provides technical assistance and capacity building to countries to help them identify and nominate potential World Heritage Sites, particularly in underrepresented regions. UNESCO also works with local communities and stakeholders to ensure their participation in the identification, conservation, and management of World Heritage Sites.

Apart from the steps already taken by UNESCO, the following initiatives can be recommended to attain a balanced representation of world heritage sites:

1. Expanding its outreach to underrepresented regions and countries: UNESCO may increase its outreach to underrepresented areas and countries by offering targeted information and assistance to help them better understand the World Heritage process and the advantages of inscription.
2. Supporting sustainable development: UNESCO might encourage practices that aid in the protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage places. This might entail collaborating with local communities, governments, and private-sector partners to ensure that development operations respect and protect cultural and natural assets.
3. Collaboration between States Parties: UNESCO may promote cooperation between States Parties to find and suggest underrepresented sites. This can entail organising regional and global conferences and workshops where States Parties can exchange information and experience on the nomination procedure.

4. Increasing partnerships with civil society: In order to guarantee that many viewpoints and views are heard during the World Heritage process, UNESCO might increase collaborations with civil society organizations, such as non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, community groups and all other local bodies and institutions. This can actually be one of the most effective ways to achieve a balanced representation of world heritage although it is also difficult to achieve this as it requires going for a grass roots contact and representation and that too on a global level but in order to achieve this, the 3rd and 4th recommendations can actually be combines. State Parties can aid UNESCO by establishing contact with local bodies and ensuring that their ideas and viewpoints reach UNESCO and that they are also implemented upon.

4.5   Guiding questions

● How can we further advance in the goal of achieving a balanced World Heritage representation?

● How could a change in the voting procedures improve the list of World Heritage sites in terms of balance?

(For a detailed explanation see: Enrico Bertacchini, Claudia Liuzza & Lynn Meskell (2015): Shifting the balance of power in the UNESCO World Heritage Committee: an empirical assessment, International Journal of Cultural Policy, DOI:10.1080/10286632.2015.1048243)

● Climate change is affecting many World Heritage sites, particularly those in vulnerable regions such as small island states, coastal areas, and arctic regions. These impacts can include sea-level rise, increased frequency and intensity of storms, coastal erosion, and melting of glaciers and permafrost, which can cause significant damage to cultural and natural heritage. If these impacts are not addressed, it could result in the loss of some World Heritage sites and a further imbalance in the representation of different regions and types of heritage. In that sense, how could addressing the impacts of climate change on World Heritage sites balance the list of World Heritage sites?

● How could a broader definition of "cultural heritage" balance the list of World Heritage sites?

● During the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee, the representative of Cuba, Mr. Julio Muñoz, made a statement in which he referred to the Tentative Lists submitted by States Parties to UNESCO for the purpose of nominating potential World Heritage sites. In his statement, Mr. Muñoz expressed the view that many of the Tentative Lists submitted by States Parties were 'cumulatice' in nature, meaning that they simply listed all of the potential sites within a given country without providing a more detailed analysis of the heritage value of each site. He also pointed out that "there was a lack of coordination and harmonization of Tentative Lists on the subregional level". (UNESCO, 2004, p.285). In that regard, in its decision 28 COM 13.1, UNESCO recalled the necessity "to implement regional, and, as appropriate, sub-regional programmes based on results of Periodic Reporting to increase the State Parties' capacity for the identification, nomination, and conservation of World Heritage properties,". In that sense, how is regional and sub-regional cooperation failing and how can it be improved so as to generate a better-balanced World Heritage representation?

Tip from the Chairs: Apart from the recommendations for UNESCO to achieve a balanced world heritage mentioned in the study guide, we would like all the participants to come up with

more solutions to the stated problem because we would personally like the committee to have more of a solution-oriented approach along with finding different ways and methods to look deeper into the problems and solving them as well. That is why guiding questions have been included in the study guide so that the participants get a direction for the research. For extra readings in order to research for the committee, we would recommend the participants to go through the readings mentioned in the bibliography as well as the readings mentioned in suggested readings, although we do understand the time constraint in going through all of them. It is absolutely fine if you all cannot go through all the readings but we are simply recommending it for a deeper understanding of the topic as well as a deeper understanding of the committee as well.

4.6   Suggested Reading

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