

UNESCO'S 75 Years Journey in Uganda

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is one of the fifteen specialized agencies in the UN system. It was established in 1946 in response to the ruthless destruction of life, property and environment occasioned by the World War II, with the specific goal of laying the foundation for peace in the world through education, science, culture, communication and Information.

In this regard, UNESCO's aspirations have and will always remain as the attainment of peace through engagement in its fields of competence, namely; Education, Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information. Thus, UNESCO's mission statement in its Medium Term Strategy 2014-2021 stated: "To contribute to the building of peace, eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, sciences, communication and information".

Through education, ignorance and illiteracy could be addressed. Through conservation and natural resource management, structured exploitation of resources could be achieved. Through dialogue and cultural expression, cultural diversity can be appreciated. By understanding social transformation, social justice, equality and tolerance could be realized. Finally, through responsible journalism and the rights to information, better communication would be enhanced. Cumulatively, all these complement each other to achieve one common purpose which is to influence alternative ways and means to solve differences other than violence and war and for this reason UNESCO was established.

Other key thematic areas of UNESCO include; Youth, HIV & AIDS and Gender.

In order to ensure permanent presence of UNESCO in Member States and also to contribute to UNESCO's efforts to promote international cooperation in the field of intellectual activities, UNESCO embedded in Article VII of its Constitution the establishment of National Commissions.

By virtue of Uganda's membership to the United Nations, Uganda became eligible to the membership of UNESCO and indeed, became a member of UNESCO on the 9th November 1962.

In September 1963, Uganda, pursuant to Article VII of the UNESCO Constitution established a National Commission as a quasi-autonomous institution in the Ministry of Education. Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM) was established to perform the core functions of National Commissions for

UNESCO which are;

- i. Consultative and Advisory
- ii. Liaison
- iii. Information gathering and dissemination
- iv. Programme formulation and implementation.

UNESCO and its Unique network of National Commissions has marked 75 years of success and the actions that mark the history of fruitful cooperation between UNESCO and Uganda National Commission for UNESCO are recalled and reviewed below according to core areas of Competence.

Education

UNESCO has been a major player in Uganda's education system and has provided various forms of assistance over the years as described below.

1. Between 1967 and 1978 UNESCO supported the project "Basic Education Integrated into Rural Development" (Pilot Phase) based at Namutamba Primary Teachers Training College, popularly known as "Namutamba Project". The aim of this project was to ensure that basic education is integrated in rural development such that pupils who receive such education would make a significant contribution to the development of their areas even if they didn't continue with further education.
2. Between 1971 and 1979 UNESCO supported and assisted in the establishment of a planning unit in the Ministry of Education and sports
3. Between 1973 and 1979 UNESCO supported the setting up of National Curriculum Development Center.
4. Between 1973 and 1979 UNESCO contributed to the development of Technical Teacher Training at UTC Kyambogo and NTC Kyambogo
5. Between 2001 and 2009 Uganda Chaired the Science Commission under Prof. Lugujjo as President
6. In 2009 Uganda was elected as a member of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) and was represented by the Late Hon. Tibarimbasa Avitus
7. In 2013 TTISSA study was launched and the study report findings and recommendations have influenced recent actions in the Education sector in Uganda particularly on teacher professional development, namely;

- i. Development of a comprehensive National Teachers Policy.
 - ii. Development of a Teacher Management Information System (TMIS) and strengthening Education Management Information System.
 - iii. Development of Teacher competence profiles for Early Childhood Development, Primary and Secondary Schools.
 - iv. Development of a harmonized pre-service teacher training curriculum and a continuous professional development framework for effective delivery of quality Education
8. In 2016 CFIT hubs established in Kyambogo, Nakawa and Shimoni with support from UNESCO.



Hon. Minister for Education and Sports/First Lady officially receiving the Teacher Information Management System (TMIS) equipment from Rosie Agoi, Secretary General UNATCOM (Copyright: UNATCOM)

Natural Sciences

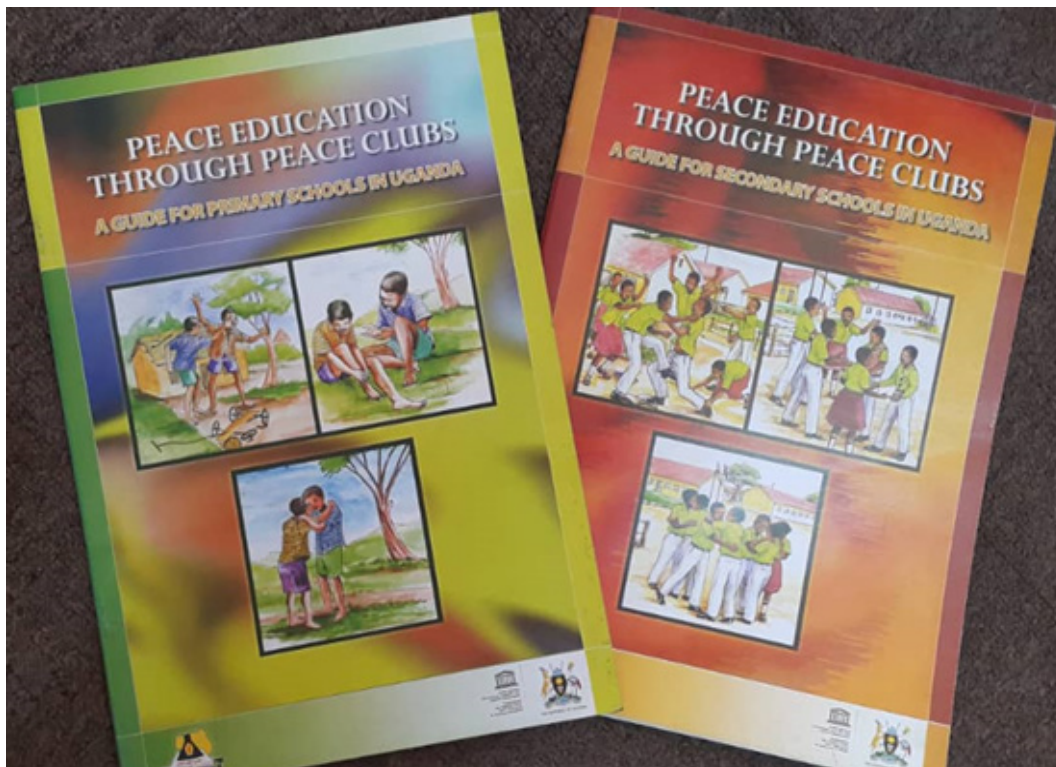
1. In 1979 Queen Elizabeth was recognized by UNESCO as an International Biosphere Reserve. The Queen Elizabeth biosphere reserve with a Ramsar site has the greatest biodiversity under protection in Uganda.
2. In 1988 UNESCO under the UNESCO Chairs programme granted seed money to recruit a Professor to assist Makerere University draw out a programme to support the establishment of the Department of Food science and Technology to teach and conduct research in food science and technology related activities. This department has become Uganda's leading centre for training and research in food sciences, food technology and human nutrition.
3. In 1989 UNESCO clubs were first established in Uganda with an aim of fostering international understanding, unity, peace and cooperation in all UNESCO areas of competence. The clubs seek to improve the conditions of life and cultivating a good climate for peaceful coexistence and sustainable development of the human race.
4. In 1993 Mt. Elgon was recognized by UNESCO as Biosphere reserve. At 4,000km² Mt. Elgon has the world's largest volcanic base and is the oldest and largest solitary, volcanic mountain in East Africa, home to over 300 species of birds, variety of wildlife, the Bagisu, the Sabiny, marginalized Ndorobos and Benet tribes.
5. In 1994 Rwenzori Mountain National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable forest were inscribed as World Heritage sites.
6. In 1997, the following sites were put on the tentative list of World Heritage sites;
 - i. Bigo bya Mugenyi (Archaeological Earthworks)
 - ii. Kibiro (Salt producing village)
 - iii. Ntusi (man-made mounds and Basin)
 - iv. Nyero and other hunter-gatherer geometric rock art sites in eastern Uganda
7. 2007 Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP) was put on the tentative World Heritage site list.



Top: School of Food Technology, Nutrition and Bio-Engineering at Makerere University (Copyright: UNATCOM)
Bottom: A Tree-climbing Lion and a gazelle or Uganda Kob in Queen Elizabeth Biosphere Reserve (Copyright: UNESCO)

Social and Human Sciences

1. Between 2005 and 2019 UNESCO supported the Integration of Human Rights and Peace Education in Uganda's Education System for Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence in pursuit of Uganda's Commitment towards the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), proclaimed by UN member states in 2004.
2. In 1994, the intervention of strengthening professional contribution to HIV/AIDS prevention and control Strategies led to the establishment through a memorandum of cooperation of a twinning programme between Makerere University and John Hopkins University (USA) under UNITWIN Programme of UNESCO aimed at human resources and institutional capacity building for youths' health and development in Uganda with a focus on the girl child within the framework if HIV/AIDS research and prevention.



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Culture

1. In 2001 Kasubi Tombs was inscribed on the list of World Heritage sites
2. In March 2010 Kasubi tombs gutted by Fire and was consequently listed among the World Heritage sites in danger.
3. In 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Government of Uganda and UNESCO for the Revitalization and Reconstruction of the Royal Tombs of Buganda Kingdom at Kasubi with support from the Japanese Funds in Trust. This project supported the restoration of authenticity and sustainability of the site, the development of a disaster risk management system at the site as well as documentation of the thatching and reconstruction process.



Kasubi tombs before the fire

Destroyed by fire March, 2010

Construction of concrete poles



Raised part of the structure

Thatching work (Wamara tombs)

*Decorative ceiling structure
(Wamara tombs)*

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in Cultural Heritage (JCIC)]

Communication and Information

1. In 1997 Uganda National Commission for UNESCO under its Communication and Information Programme embarked on and has been involved in the establishment of Various Community Multimedia Centers (CMC's) with support from UNESCO and other partners. The project aimed at stimulating rural development by facilitating communication and access to information and learning resources. As a result of the project, seven community multimedia centers were established i.e. Nakaseke, Buwama, Nabweru, Kachwekano, Ngora, Kagadi, and Apac to meet the information needs of the people in the community.



Alex Byaruhanga and Susan Mariam Presenters of Youth Empowerment (Eddoboozi Lyomuvubuka) radio program every Saturday at Nakaseke Community Multimedia Centre (Copyright: UNATCOM)

Programme Execution and Support

1. Between 1974 and 1978 Uganda was elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO with Mr. Arthur Bagunya as the Country Representative.
2. In 1997, The then Director General OF UNESCO Mr. Frederic Mayor visited Uganda and during his visit, he met President Museveni, the Vice President, Cabinet Ministers, Cultural Leaders, Vice Chancellors and other officials participating in executing programmes in UNESCO's areas of competence and amicable and fruitful discussions on a wide range of topics.
3. Between 1998 and 2001 Uganda was elected on the Executive Board with Prof. Lugujjo as the country rep.
4. In 2004 Director General of UNESCO Koichiro Matsuura visited Uganda
5. Between 2005 and 2009 Uganda elected on the UNESCO EXB with Prf. Lugujjo as Representative.
6. In 2007, the first strategic plan for NATCOM was launched to run for 10 years from 2007 to 2017.
7. In 2009 Uganda was Co-Chair and Secretariat for formation of the East Africa NATCOMs Capacity Building Programme.
8. In 2010 Uganda hosted the 12th Conference of NATCOMs and Director General's consultation with NATCOMS of the African Region. The Director General Irina Bokova attended.
9. In 2010 UNESCO Project office established in Kampala.
10. Between 2013 and 2017 Uganda elected on the UNESCO EXB with Dr. Eric Edroma (RIP) and later Allan Birabi as Representative
11. In 2014 UNATCOM Act of Parliament was enacted.
12. In 2018 the first UNATCOM Board under the 2014 Act was appointed.