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Intersectoral Platforms (IPs)

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The Quest for Intersectorality

- The quest for **intersectorality** is almost as old as UNESCO itself. It is the desire to overcome the ivory tower-syndrome of several programme sectors working next to each other, in parallel and without synergy or mutual fertilization or inspiration
- Yet, intersectorality is a term not easily understood outside Place de Fontenoy. It is very UNESCO-specific, as it relates to its organizational structure.
- Rather, a more widely understood term would be **interdisciplinarity** or **multidisciplinarity**, which is an objective with which also many other institutions, like national Academy of Sciences or universities are struggling.
- The raison d'être for intersectorality/interdisciplinarity is that the **multi-dimensional, complex problems of the contemporary world** require a response built on many disciplinary competences.
- UNESCO's multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary base has always been seen as a **major comparative advantage** for the Organization in the multilateral arena - and especially in the era of globalization with its exceedingly complex challenges.



Recent intersectoral experience: CCT projects

- Many different approaches, models and modalities have been pursued by UNESCO over the years, often times driven by the strong insistence, if not impatience of Member States
- The most recent experience occurred during the medium-term strategy for 2001-2007 (31 C/4) with its **two cross-cutting themes (CCT)**, namely (a) the fight against poverty, especially extreme poverty and (b) the building of knowledge societies through UNESCO's five sectoral domains
- For the three biennial programme and budgets of this period, provisions were made for funding of projects related to the CCTs, illustrating the benefits and impact of intersectoral action
- The CCT projects were developed by individually formed staff teams outside hierarchical lines, selected on a competitive basis and implemented with a high degree of independence, though senior management provided regular managerial supervision and guidance



From CCT projects to intersectoral platforms

- The CCT projects were complemented by « traditional » intersectoral engagement between various Programm Sectors and their respective divisions as well as intersectoral action by field offices
- Despite the positive evaluation and impact of many CCT projects and the replicability of several approaches, it was felt that with the adoption of a new « face » medium-term strategy for 2008-2013 (34 C/4), which was built on strong intersectoral foundations and perspectives, a different approach would be required to advance the Organization's action more systematically in pursuing the overarching and strategic programme objectives as well as a number of priority themes identified by the General Conference. Such an approach had to be linked with the sectoral management structure, accountability lines and main expected results defined by the General Conference.
- Thus, the **intersectoral platform modality was born**- with the objective of enabling « **UNESCO to deliver as One** ». A set of proposed platforms was accordingly included in the draft 34 C/5.
- It was designed not only as an in-house mechanism **to promote housewide reflection, develop a common strategy and related expected results for tackling high-priority problems**, but even more as a modality for programme implementation, including the formulation of action plans with dedicated funds.



The key characteristics of intersectoral platforms

- Intersectoral platforms are a modality for **programme design AND delivery** to enable UNESCO to respond in an interdisciplinary manner to some complex contemporary challenges falling within UNESCO's domains.
- In **organizational terms**, each platform is led by a **lead ADG** (or in one case the **DDG**) who also chairs a **Steering Committee** with all other ADGs of participating Sectors. The Steering Committee is designed as an oversight mechanism to give strategic support and guidance to the platforms. This includes identifying opportunities for cross-fertilization of approaches and experiences, avoidance of overlap, monitoring and reporting on progress achieved as well as resolution of practical difficulties encountered. It meets periodically to assess progress.
- The lead ADG also heads an **operational task team**, supported by a **platform manager** (chosen either from the Sector of the lead ADG or another participating sector). It unites focal points representing all participating Sectors, field offices and UNESCO institutes (category 1). The Platform Manager is charged with coordinating all substantive input and the operational requirements for implementation.
- The **College of ADGs** regularly reviews the progress made by the various platforms.

Key characteristics - cont'd

- For each participating sector an indicative **financial contribution** to the platform had been provided in the 34 C/5 Approved. The Director-General mandated that this amount be taken as a floor which cannot be reduced during the biennium - but only increased. It can also be augmented by extrabudgetary contributions.
- The Steering Committee and the Operational Task Teams were to review and refine the platform's objectives, strategy and expected results. They are to develop an action plan for implementation - globally, regionally and at the country level
- The two global priorities of the Organization, **Africa** and **Gender Equality** must mandatorily be addressed by each platform
- Likewise, each platform is requested by the Director-General to include **capacity-building measures** among its actions, as this is one of the key functions of the Organization defined in the 34 C/4.
- Platforms are also mandated by the Director-General to focus on contributions and input to common country programming exercises by UN country teams as well as on enhancing the publicity of UNESCO's action.



The **twelve Intersectoral Platforms for 2008-2009**, as included in the **34 C/5 approved**, are:

- Science education
- HIV and AIDS
- Education for sustainable development
- Contribution to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- Fostering ICT-enhanced learning
- Strengthening national research systems
- Languages and multilingualism
- Contributing to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and a culture of peace
- Support to countries in post-conflict and disaster situations
- Priority Africa: coordinating and monitoring the plan of action to benefit Africa
- UNESCO action to address climate change
- Anticipation and foresight



Where do we stand?

- All platforms and their mechanisms have started working and are operational.
- Considerable excitement and expectations throughout the House. Field offices are participating actively in many platforms.
- All have reviewed and refined their objectives and strategies (see the various fact sheets distributed) as well as their expected results. Several have developed specific action plans.
- Budgetary allocations have been validated by all Sectors for the various platforms. This information has been entered into SISTER and FABS. The total amounts earmarked by Sectors and field offices are almost **triple the volume** anticipated in the indicative figures of the 34 C/5
- **The stage is thus set for proceeding with the implementation process.**
- Some platforms have prepared or are preparing intersectoral proposals to raise extrabudgetary resources.
- Areas for inter-platform complementarities, synergies and networking opportunities have been identified.
- Platform managers have begun to exchange experiences and to identify operational or management problems common to many platforms
- A **website** has been created to provide information about the evolution of the work of the platforms and more generally to enhance visibility:
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=42645&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
- During the month of September four sets of "**60 minutes to convince**" will be devoted to intersectoral platforms, so as to provide information to, and increase the awareness among, staff and delegations

Examples of concrete intersectoral deliverables through the platforms

Intersectoral Platform on Strengthening National Research Systems

- A review of the national research system of Madagascar has been undertaken in the framework of the Madagascar Action Plan (MAP), based on a request by the country. According to the MAP target date, a national policy for research should be in place no later than 2011.
- UNESCO's contribution is initially coordinated jointly by SC and SHS (expert mission, report, establishment of a national working group), with involvement in subsequent stages by ED and UIS.

Intersectoral Platform for action to address Climate Change

- Through the platform, the need to address the social and human dimensions of climate change has been identified and in the process has also been suggested as a focus area for UN system action
- The platform will now work to define and implement specific actions in this area as part of its action plan on climate change
- Moreover, UNESCO, together with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), has been charged with the role as convenor for UN agencies active in the cross-cutting area of science, assessment, monitoring and early warning ("the knowledge base"), which is being managed through the platform
- The platform also provided guidance to UNESCO members of UN country teams contributing to the preparation of concept papers for several successful UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund projects under the thematic window of Environment and Climate Change.

Intersectoral Platform for Anticipation and Foresight

- As mandated by the General Conference, the platform has concentrated from the beginning on linking foresight activities better with sectoral actions and needs - through a sequential three-phased approach relevant for all sectors:
 - sharing of experience and approaches with experts from other organisations and institutions about their approach to foresight and its integration in regular programming
 - Intersectoral workshop to familiarise staff with foresight tools and approaches for integration into their regular work (next week)
 - Sector-specific meeting of staff of Office for Foresight with each Sector to identify needs and thematic opportunities for integration of foresight dimensions into programming and programmes (beginning later in September)



The value-added of intersectoral platforms?

- Intersectoral platforms - a gateway to One UNESCO
- One UNESCO - a gateway for a more effective insertion of UNESCO in the UN system “delivering as one” at the country level
- “delivering as one” with its joint programming and implementation approaches is the **UN system equivalent of UNESCO’s intersectorality**: working across sectoral/organizational frontiers, pursuing a commonly defined objective(s) and implementing jointly agreed strategies; UNESCO’s intersectoral experience and relevant staff expertise make it thus more relevant and capable for strategic leadership at country level and especially in UN country teams (UNCTs)

The value-added of IPs - cont'd

- Platforms allow the creation and implementation of a **new type and quality of "product" or "service"** which is more integrated and relevant for the "real" world than the previous individualised and "additive" approach to intersectorality
- Platforms allow a **more dedicated bottom-up, programme-centred approach**, benefitting from field-level input and experience, where intersectoral collaboration and work methods are more often the norm than the exception
- New quality of deliverables and their relevance may attract **additional extrabudgetary resources and partners**



What next?

- Present activities are part of an organization-wide learning process, which needs to be nurtured, monitored and assessed as to its impact
- Results reporting to Executive Board to start after implementation process has taken off
- Identification of overlaps or duplications in the work of the different platforms (e.g. climate change or ESD are also topics also for other platforms); clearer delineation of objectives to follow
- Need for ongoing refinement and improvement - also benefitting from networking and exchange of experience among platform managers and teams
- Preparation of draft 35 C/5: reflect about possible consolidation of some platforms; allocation of increased resources for platforms; and pooling of resources across and among sectors

Thank you for your attention.

There follows a Q+A period -
with involvement of those lead ADGs
and platform managers present.