



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Education
Sector



Textbooks
and Learning
Resources:

A Global
Framework
for Policy
Development



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Textbooks and Learning Resources:

A Framework for Policy Development

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| ADEA | Association for the Development of Education in Africa |
| ALECSO | Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| DFA | Dakar Framework for Action |
| EFA | Education for All |
| GEI | Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research |
| GASERC | Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center |
| IARTEM | International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media |
| IBE | International Bureau of Education |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IEG | International Expert Group |
| IMT | Internal Monitoring Template |
| ISESCO | Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OER | Open Educational Resource |
| UDHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WB | The World Bank |

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Preface

Since the publication of UNESCO's *Comprehensive Strategy for Textbook and Learning Materials* in 2004, the role of textbooks in teaching and learning has undergone a profound transformation. In many parts of the world, teachers and learners no longer regard printed and bound textbooks as the sole authoritative source of knowledge, but as one among many. In classrooms, libraries and homes where access to the internet is freely available, the new media age has broadened opportunities for learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to cope with the demands of our changing world. Yet, this proliferation of instantly accessible information has also brought unforeseen challenges for policy makers, educators and parents. While age-old concerns over textbook quality and use persist, the question of how to make optimal use of evolving technologies and approaches to learning is rapidly moving into the spotlight.

In response to the rapidly changing demands of life and work, learning itself is increasingly understood as an activity that is both enjoyable and necessary to continue throughout life using all the resources at one's disposal. With the continuing need to expand access to inclusive, quality education throughout life in mind, UNESCO is renewing its efforts to assist policy-makers and educators worldwide to develop sustainable systems for the provision of textbooks and learning resources that respond more effectively to the needs of today's learners.

As a key component of part of the comprehensive UNESCO *Toolkit on Revision and Adaptation of Curricula, School Textbooks and Other Learning Materials to Remove Cultural, Religious and Gender-biased Stereotypes*, this document directly address issues of access, quality and relevance that apply to virtually all learning resources and materials. Updates and revisions to the 2004 publication incorporate the contributions of an expanded and diverse team of international experts who have been closely engaged in the process of developing the Toolkit and its various components. As a whole, the Toolkit is intended to provide policy makers, authors, researchers and all others involved with the development, distribution and use of textbooks and learning resources with the necessary tools to enhance their quality and relevance.

While the principles and strategies set forth in this document take into account the different priorities of education systems around the world, it should be stressed that they underscore the common needs and aspirations of learners everywhere. Whatever the medium, from alphabet charts to e-books, and whatever the age and experience of the learners, such resources transmit values and shape the way people interact with the world around them. As such, they continue to have immense potential for promoting UNESCO's core principles. Building upon its long experience and leadership in international research and programmatic activity on textbooks, the framework offered in this document construes the fundamental role of both traditional and modern learning resources as tools for fostering peace through mutual understanding, human rights, gender equality, and diversity at all levels of learning. We believe that this revised and updated policy document is a necessary and critical step toward assisting countries in achieving their development goals and meeting their obligations in the field of education to both present and future generations.

I. Introduction

Background and rationale

“One of UNESCO’s most precious assets is its unique ability to serve as a place for peaceful and constructive exchange and dialogue, fostering mutual understanding and commitments between peoples and nations and to strengthen cultural diversity.”¹

Irina Bokova

UNESCO has a long and venerable history of accomplishments in the field of textbook revision, beginning at the first General Conference in 1946 with the initiation of activities aimed at “improving the quality of textbooks”² through internal, bilateral or regional review of existing texts used to teach history, civics and geography. The primary objective of these processes was to rid the texts of negative stereotypes of the ‘other’ and the glorification of war. Since the 1970s, the vision for improving the quality of textbooks and other learning materials has broadened to incorporate such universally shared principles and commitments as gender equality, the right to education for all, and sustainable development.

However, recognition of the role all learning resources as instruments for peace building and global citizenship has not been diminished by the addition of new priorities, but rather elevated as the ultimate goal of all educational initiatives. Of the four pillars of education for a changing world elaborated in the Report to UNESCO *of the International Commission on Education for the - Century*, the fourth pillar, ‘Learning to Live Together’ has been identified as the absolute priority for our times. The strategic orientation for UNESCO, as expressed in the Medium Term Strategy for 2008-2013 echoes the importance of the role of education in building a sustainable culture of peace.

The motivation for renewing and updating UNESCO’s policy on textbooks and learning resources to respond to both new and old challenges was inspired by several programmatic activities. Following the groundbreaking comparative research project of the French and Moroccan National Commissions, the Education Sector launched an initiative in 2006 in partnership with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) that resulted in a set of inter-regional guidelines for the development of textbooks and learning resources. In continuation of this work, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UNESCO agreed in 2011 to commence a comprehensive new project³ that will update the global policy, expand the scope of the guidelines, and produce a practical training tool for developers. These core documents, together with other recent UNESCO publications on gender equality and diversity will be compiled and distributed in the form of a comprehensive ‘Toolkit on Revision and Adaptation of Curricula, School Textbooks and Other Learning Materials to Remove Cultural, Religious and Gender-biased Stereotypes’.

1 UNESCO 36 C/5, Programme and Budget, 2012-2013, Introduction by the Director-General, (Paris: UNESCO, 2012) iv.

2 UNESCO 1 C/res. 6: Improvement of textbooks and teaching materials (Paris: UNESCO, 1946).

3 This project is a component of the of the “Abdullah bin Abdul Azziz International Programme for a Culture of Peace and Dialogue”, which aims to “contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science, culture and communication for further respect for justice, human rights and freedom, without distinction of race, gender, language and religion”.



In keeping with UNESCO's strategic priorities for education and recognizing the changing role of textbooks in learning processes, this updated and revised policy framework encompasses the diverse needs of all learners in a wide range of cultural contexts, economic conditions and educational settings. It also prioritizes the need for UNESCO to respond rapidly and appropriately in coordination with its partners to the urgent needs of societies and communities in distress. Over the longer term, the principles and strategies incorporated in *Textbooks and Learning Resources: A Framework for Policy Development* are intended to set processes into motion at global, regional and national levels that are responsive to diverse cultures and traditions, yet compatible with a broader vision of learning in a rapidly changing world. As the title of this document suggests, these principles and strategies aim to re-energize efforts to support the development and delivery of textbooks and learning materials that are level-appropriate, inclusive and engaging for learners of all ages, at every skill level, and in all types of learning environments.

Intended audience

Although this document is intended primarily for those responsible for developing regional, national or local education policies, it is also the case that such processes are increasingly participatory, involving publishers, authors, publishers, teachers, parents and learners. It is therefore hoped that the framework provided, along with the other guidebooks, guidelines and resources contained in the Toolkit, is available to all concerned with the development, selection and use of textbooks and learning resources in fulfillment of their vision for quality education.

Scope and structure

This policy framework incorporates broad principles that apply to all phases of textbook development and use, from the initial planning stages to production, review, revision, distribution and role in the facilitation of teaching and learning.

As the conceptual anchor of the above mentioned Toolkit, the updated and revised global policy⁴ approaches the global challenge from three angles, each of which suggests specific courses of strategic action for national and regional policy-makers:

accessibility: providing learning materials of good quality to all learners, across boundaries created by distance, age, language, ethnicity, gender or ability;

quality: harnessing the power of both old and new technologies to support quality learning processes in constructive and meaningful ways throughout life;

efficacy: setting standards for textbooks and learning resources that fulfill their potential to foster peace and global citizenship.

In Part II, each of these principles is elaborated in the form of a threefold policy objective, the overall goal of which is to **support education systems in their efforts to increase the quality and accessibility of textbooks and learning resources as tools for meeting the educational challenges of the 21st century.**

4 Based on UNESCO, *A Comprehensive Strategy for Textbooks and Learning Materials* (Paris: UNESCO, 2004).

In Part III, six specific strategies linked to each of the key principles are laid out as pathways for action within the framework of UNESCO's overarching priorities for education. The shared goal of these lines of action is to assist Member States and partner organizations in the development, equitable distribution and optimal use of textbooks and learning resources in support of inclusive, quality education.

Part IV elaborates further by filling in the details with more narrowly targeted modes of operation for education authorities to consider in establishing their own priorities and shaping their adjacent implementation plans.

Part V identifies three global priorities in parallel with the emerging post-EFA agenda in response to both long-standing and perceived future challenges. Issues and problems that loom as the major obstacles to the sustainable and equitable provision and use of quality textbooks and learning resources are described in Part VI. As with all components of this policy document, the list is far from exhaustive and is certain to be expanded along with the arrival of new challenges and solutions.

Figure 1: Textbook policy components




UNESCO's partnerships with other UN agencies, research institutes and networks, professional organizations and regional organizations, are essential to its capacity to fulfil its function as a place for exchange of ideas and constructive dialogue on the often contentious issues surrounding the critical role of textbooks and learning resources in shaping values and identities. A partial list of these key partnerships is presented in Part VII, while the Annex presents an historical overview of UNESCO's unique role in textbook revision and development.

Links to UNESCO's objectives and global priorities for education

By intentionally seeking to dismantle obstacles to learning imposed by gender, age, language, class or distance, the policy framework for textbooks and learning resources seeks to open new avenues to achieving UNESCO's objectives for education and contributing to its global priorities. As shown below, the framework for policy development regarding textbooks and learning resources is directly linked to the two strategic programme objectives approved by Member States to guide UNESCO's work in education during the medium term (2008-2013).

| LINKS TO UNESCO Medium-Term Objectives (2008-2013) | |
|--|---|
| Overarching objective | <i>Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning</i> |
| Strategic programme objective 1: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening UNESCO's global lead and coordination role for EFA and providing support to national leadership in favour of EFA.⁵ |
| Strategic programme objective 2: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development. |

⁵ In particular, building the capacities of education systems to develop and implement robust policies for the provision of textbooks and learning resources is a lever for accelerating progress toward Goal #3 (Improving learning and life skills for young people and adults, Goal #4 (Increase adult literacy), and Goal #6 (Improve the quality of education).



The approved Programme and Budget for 2012-2013 further distils areas of focus for the Education Sector in the form of biennial priorities and their adjacent main lines of action. While indirectly supporting all of these lines of action, the policy is most clearly linked to:

Biennial sectoral priority 1: *Scaling up equity, inclusion and quality in education and lifelong learning for sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence.*

MLA 1: *Accelerating progress towards EFA, particularly at country level*

MLA 2: *Building quality and inclusive education systems*

MLA 3: *Supporting education systems' responses to contemporary challenges for sustainable development and a culture of peace and nonviolence*

As summarized in the 2006 *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, "the outstanding feature of the EFA agenda has been that it strives to guarantee equal access to all regardless of social or cultural background, it is inclusive rather than exclusive in its interpretation of quality education, and it promotes universally shared values. These areas of focus also describe the principles, strategies and modes of action recommended in this document. In addition to supporting UNESCO's medium term objectives and biennial priorities for education as well as its intersectoral platforms, upon which future lines of action are likely to be constructed for the coming decades, the policy takes UNESCO's global priorities – priority Africa as the region of greatest need in terms of access and quality, and gender equality as both a principle and a set of attitudes and behaviours which can be effectively promoted in and through textbooks and learning resources globally."

The critical role of textbooks and learning resources in building fundamental literacy and numeracy skills is taken into account, as well as their efficacy as media for communicating the core values that underpin global citizenship and a culture of peace. As elaborated under MLA 3, "Education for global citizenship includes human rights education, education against discrimination; the role of history in promoting values education, intercultural and interfaith education; education for the prevention of atrocities; and education for inclusion of minorities (including linguistic and cultural minorities)."

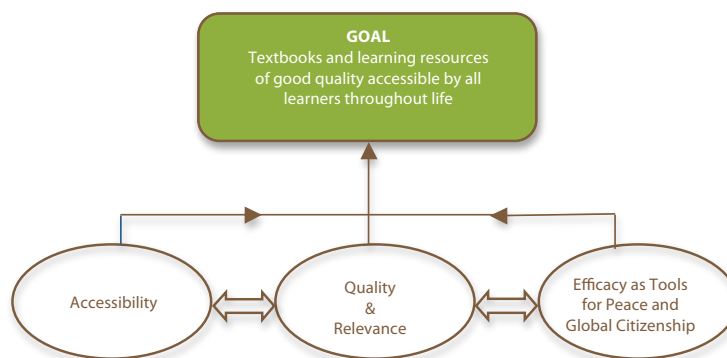
In all of the above, the principles, strategies and modes of action outlined in this updated and expanded policy framework go hand in hand with the activities of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE), the specialized institute for curriculum research, development and implementation. Indeed, as 'learning contents', textbooks and learning resources such as training tools, teachers' guides, web-based resources and electronic media are all included in the scope of the IBE's capacity building mandate for curriculum development at regional and national level.

UNESCO has been involved with improving the quality of textbooks ever since its founding. With the publication of this framework, together with the accompanying components of the Toolkit, UNESCO now stands at the threshold of a new episode in the story of how textbooks and learning resources must adapt to evolving challenges, emerging technologies and newly formulated global commitments.

III. Key Principles

Equitable access to high quality textbooks and learning materials is viewed as essential to successful learning throughout life. For meaningful progress to be made toward this goal, the three interconnected principles of *accessibility, quality and efficacy must be taken equally into account.*

Figure 2: Policy goal and key principles



High quality, relevant textbooks and learning resources are of little use if they are not in the hands of learners. Hypothetically, even if the resources are of high quality in terms of learning achievement, they may well be of questionable value if they fail to address learners' actual needs, whether individually, locally or collectively as citizens of the world.

Inevitably, there are multiple understandings of each of these principles as they are articulated in the language and agendas of different organizations and systems. For purposes of clarification, an explanation of each concept as it fits within UNESCO's educational priorities and used in this policy statement follows:

1. Accessibility

In regard to textbooks and learning resources, 'accessibility' describes the extent to which an individual or group is able to acquire and use these tools, either freely or at an affordable cost. In formal education systems, accessibility is controlled by policies for the provision of textbooks, supplementary materials, teaching aids and other supplies to schools, teachers and learners. Book provision policies may also incorporate measures for the distribution of materials to libraries and non-formal or alternative education programmes. Outside of the realm of print materials, and particularly with the rapidly expanding availability of broadband internet services, accessibility enables learners to connect with a wide array of resources, such as online libraries⁶, downloadable textbooks connected to a national or local curriculum⁷, e-books, multimedia, online courses, and other types of open educational resources (OERs). Access to a third type of learning resources, those created by bearers of traditional knowledge and skills using local resources, is also a policy issue in that indigenous learning media may require sustained support in order to raise awareness of its validity and relevance.

6 For example, with the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL), which provides free access to high quality digital books from around the world.

7 Such as the set of 100 textbooks made available to Iraqi students through a dedicated website developed by the UNESCO Office for Iraq

2. Quality and relevance

“A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of learning.”

Dakar Framework for Action, 2000

The notion of ‘quality education’ generally describes a process that enables people to acquire the necessary technical skills for the world of work, adapt to changing life circumstances, and cope with more complex responsibilities. Competencies for life and work in the 21st century may further include, for example, the ability to work with others to solve problems, approach new challenges with creativity and flexibility, think critically and communicate effectively in several languages. This broader concept also requires that quality education is inherently inclusive; that is, it meets the needs of all learners and prepares them for the challenges to come. Similarly, as applied to curricula, textbooks, methods and learning environments, the basic principle of quality encompasses that of relevance. In other words, a quality education is, by definition, relevant to learner’s lives, goals, and cultural contexts.

In describing the quality of textbooks and learning resources, criteria are often based on their physical appearance and durability as well as their communicative and pedagogical effectiveness. Similarly, the quality of electronic media may be judged in terms of functionality as well as design, interactivity and ease of navigation. However, such questions as ‘How well do the media/materials support the intended curriculum?’ ‘How effectively do they motivate and engage learners?’ and ‘How relevant are they to learners’ lives and aspirations?’ should also be asked in ways that help both policy makers and implementers determine how well they actually support a system’s vision of quality.


3. Efficacy as tools for building peace and global citizenship

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”

–Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Art. 26.2

The efficacy, or potential, of textbooks and by extension, learning resources both old and new, as vehicles for the promotion of peace and global citizenship falls squarely within the core mandate of UNESCO to ‘build the defences of peace’ in the minds of men and women. This principle is as important today, and perhaps even more so, than it was in 1946, when the First General Conference turned its attention to textbooks. The growth of the field of international textbook research aimed at revising textbooks in ways that promote mutual understanding among former enemies has been well documented in the 2nd revised and updated edition of the *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*.⁸

8 Falk Pingel, (Paris/Braunschweig: UNESCO and GEI, 2010).



Since the 1970s, international discussions and activities on the role of education in building peace through international understanding and conflict prevention have recognized the need for a global approach, crossing disciplinary as well as geographical boundaries. For example, the *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*⁹ called for Member States to “encourage educational authorities and educators to give education...an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented content adapted to the complexity of the issues involved in the application of human rights and in international co-operation”, and to encourage activities at all levels, even in pre-school years, that form positive attitudes and conflict mediation skills. In its present day activities under the auspices of UNESCO and its partners¹⁰ the field of international textbook research has gained wide acceptance and has produced viable, adaptable models and well validated methodologies for understanding and evaluating the efficacy and role of textbooks in peace building.

Sometimes considered as dimensions of quality education, the twin concepts of peace and global citizenship and the teaching-learning practices associated with them can be both instruments and outcomes. As an ensemble of skills, knowledge and attitudes, this and similar lines of action merge to form the concept of education for global citizenship, which is expanded further in the framework of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing).¹¹ In reality, the implementation of educational policies and practices that promote peace and global citizenship, whether in schools, makeshift classrooms or virtual learning environments, share the common values and are directed to a common purpose. How well textbooks and learning resources, through their content, design and communicative power facilitate these practices and achieve these goals is the measure of their efficacy as tools for peace.

9 Adopted in 1974 by the 18th UNESCO General Conference

10 In particular, through its long standing partnership with the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research

11 See also *Education Above All, Education for Global Citizenship*, Ed. Margaret Sinclair (Doha: EAA, 2012).

III. Strategies

The strategies described in this section are directed toward orienting the work of UNESCO and its partners in the development, distribution and optimal use of textbooks and learning resources in support of inclusive, quality education at all levels throughout life. The list presented here is intended as an inventory of possible interventions that may be extended and adapted to regional and country needs. Lines of action are organized according to the principles with which they are most directly linked, with the first two overarching strategies (consensus building on international frameworks and standards and encouragement of alternative solutions and innovative approaches) leveraging all strategic interventions.

| Strategies FOR ACHIEVING ACCESSIBILITY, QUALITY AND EFFICACY | |
|--|---|
| OVERARCHING STRATEGIES | <p>Consensus building on international frameworks and standards</p> <p>Encouragement of alternative solutions and innovative approaches</p> |
| Accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in planning for equitable and sustainable textbook provision, availability of reading materials and expanded access to learning resources that meet the needs of all learners. • Support efforts to build the capacities of national and local publishing industries as providers of affordable textbooks and reading materials. |
| Quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the integration of learner-centered approaches, active learning methodologies and the development of higher order thinking skills. • Encourage efforts to incorporate local and indigenous knowledge, skills and materials as valid resources for achieving curriculum outcomes. |
| Efficacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in the development of regional and national policies that promote peace, gender equality and sustainable development in and through textbooks and learning resources. • Support global, regional and inter-ethnic consultations on textbooks and learning resources with a view toward challenging negative stereotypes, encouraging multiple perspectives and facilitating intercultural dialogue. |

1. Overarching strategies

1. SEEK CONSENSUS ON INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND STANDARDS.

The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) stipulated that, to be able to provide education of good quality, “educational institutions and programmes should be adequately and equitably resourced with the core requirements...(including) books, other learning materials and technologies that are context specific, cost effective and available to all learners.”

Today, opportunities abound for renewing and revitalizing the same or similar approaches. As with all forms of media, textbooks and learning resources used both in and outside of classrooms have the power to either intensify or to overcome obstacles to understanding among peoples of different histories, faiths, cultures and social codes. While continuing in the tradition of textbook consultations involving researchers and authors representing different points of view, UNESCO can take advantage of the potential offered by new technologies to create common platforms and shared experiences from vastly divergent points of view¹² both within and across regional and national borders. Passage by the World Open Educational Resources Congress of the 2012 Declaration is a prime example of such agreement at global level.¹³

With the ultimate aim of reaching a set of internationally accepted standards of access and quality, UNESCO will continue to facilitate dialogue among Member States on plans for accelerating progress toward equitable access to textbooks and learning resources of good quality as a fundamental tenet of the universal right to education.

2. ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES.

Over the past few decades, developments in communication technologies have brought about a worldwide shift in the way textbooks and learning resources are defined, created, distributed and used. While the familiar printed and bound textbooks have maintained a certain authority in most education systems, in others they have retreated to the sidelines as one of several resources. Moreover, along with more dialogic, constructivist theories of learning as well as the influence of more screen-based design decisions,¹⁴ textbooks often show a multi-coloured design and a varied structure of content and methodology. In deliberations on the quality of textbooks, other print based media and electronic media as well as web-based resources, UNESCO will work with its partners¹⁵ to identify and support good practices that have proven to be effective in reducing gaps in learning achievement. It will also initiate a broader dialogue on the applications of new, more mobile printing technologies and streamlined, more efficient distribution chains as possible solutions to the high cost of imported textbooks or highly centralized book production systems.

12 As in the multi-phase Council of Europe Project ‘The Image of the Other in History Teaching’

13 Full text of the Declaration can be viewed and downloaded from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/access-to-knowledge/open-educational-resources/>

14 See Gunther Kress, *Literacy in the New Media Age* (London and New York: Routledge, n.d.).

15 Such as the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research and the International Association for Textbooks and Educational Media (IARTEM).

2. Strategies for achieving Accessibility

(i) Assist in planning for equitable and sustainable textbook provision, availability of reading materials and expanded access to resources that meet the needs of all learners.

Meeting the needs of all learners means recognizing the full range of human diversity and providing equitable access to quality education without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, age, economic status, or social class background. In the domain of textbooks and learning resources, it means providing media that communicate in languages that are comprehensible to learners, and communicate at the appropriate conceptual and linguistic level.¹⁶ Consistent with its policy on multilingual education and mother tongue instruction, UNESCO will assist with national efforts to ensure textbooks and other materials provided by schools in support of early grade literacy are in the learners' mother tongue(s). Equitable and sustainable textbook provision also means meeting the needs of learners with disabilities. Specifically, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNESCO will promote the realization of the educational rights of learners including "facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication."¹⁷

A strategy for equitable and sustainable provision of textbooks and learning resources also calls for strengthened efforts to respond to the learning needs of populations who have been excluded from learning. For obvious reasons, education systems in countries suffering from conflict or recovering from natural disasters have much greater obstacles to overcome in this regard. Even if a textbook production and distribution system had been in place before the outbreak of conflict, infrastructures and capacities for book publishing may have been debilitated or completely destroyed.¹⁸

Part of UNESCO's capacity building role in EFA has been to intensify its activities to ensure the right to education to poor, remote and rural communities, where children may be struggling to learn to read with little more than faded blackboards and tattered copybooks as resources. It is equally important to convince governments who are lagging behind in meeting the Dakar goals by 2015 (and beyond) to place a larger portion of their human and financial resources into the book sector and the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) dedicated to expanding access to distance education, open educational resources (OERs) and Free and Open Source Software (FOSS).

UNESCO's involvement with promising new initiatives to expand access to high-speed technologies such as the Broadband Commission for Digital Development are essential in closing the digital divide and making optimal use of ICTs in education. For example, a report¹⁹ released during the World Education Summit on the Information Society +10 (February 2013) calls on policy makers to help ensure equitable access in order to help students everywhere connect with the world of online resources and thereby enhance the quality of their education and improve their employment prospects.

16 See also UNESCO, *Addressing Exclusion: A Guide to Assessing Education Systems Towards More Inclusive and Just Societies* (Paris: UNESCO, 2012).

17 *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006), Article 24/3.a

18 As in the case of Iraq, where the UNESCO Textbook Quality Improvement Programme (2003-2005) oversaw the emergency revision, printing and distribution of 8.7 million textbooks.

19 *Technology, Broadband and Education: Advancing the Education for All Agenda*. Paris: UNESCO and International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2013.

(ii) Support efforts to build the capacities of national and local publishing industries as providers of affordable textbooks and reading materials.

Current trends in textbook production and distribution in many countries reflect a transition from centrally controlled, government-owned systems to more decentralized publishing and distribution arrangements. In some cases, for example, schools and teachers may have the option of choosing from among several approved titles produced by private publishers. The books are then purchased from the publisher and either made available to students at low cost, rented or loaned free of charge. Overall, the trend toward decentralization of the book sector has not only contributed toward creating more plentiful reading materials in emerging literate environments, but also produced more pedagogically effective and engaging materials,²⁰ for use in schools and learning centres.

However, significant challenges remain, especially in terms of assuring that the materials reach their destinations, are affordable and put to optimal use. Decisions by donors and governments to allow only state-run publishing and to import textbooks and children's literature from Europe or North America has had the effect of depriving local publishers of their most lucrative markets.²¹ Therefore, UNESCO's support in this area aims to encourage cooperation among all actors to mobilize political will and channel funding to the book sector in ways that will help ensure flourishing publishing industries in developing countries. Decentralized systems also tend to allow more space for the production of learning materials that respond to the needs of diverse learners, including those with special needs. More limited publishing runs also allow for materials with a higher degree of relevance to place, culture and local concerns. It also opens new opportunities for users of learning materials to become creators. Indeed, one of the positive outcomes of decentralization is an increase in the number and diversity of skilled textbook authors, illustrators and creators of other learning resources, resulting eventually in broader range of choices for schools and communities.

3. Strategies for achieving Quality

(i) Promote the integration of learner-centered approaches, active learning methodologies and the development of higher order thinking skills.

Whether or not textbooks are the main blueprints for teaching and learning at any level of education, their contents and design can have a significant influence on the way the curriculum is delivered and the foundations for higher levels of learning are constructed. Especially in circumstances where teachers do not have access to extended pre-service or in-service training opportunities, it is common to use the textbook and accompanying teacher's guide (if available) as a lesson plan.

Formats consisting solely of text followed by a battery of information questions are disappearing in favour of more visually appealing, multi-modal designs that seek to awaken curiosity and stimulate readers' engagement with the world of information and ideas. A set of guidelines developed by an international team of textbook researchers, authors and publishers, suggest that the materials should "evoke learner-centred, participatory and action-oriented teaching and learning practices such as concept-mapping, interactive learning, learning

20 Montagnes, Ian. Paper presented at the World Education Forum, Dakar Senegal. In *Thematic Studies: Textbooks and Learning Materials, 1990-1999*, Paris: UNESCO, 2001.

21 Walker, Scott. "Promoting Children's Book Publishing in Anglophone Africa," in V. Greaney, ed. *Promoting Reading in Developing Countries*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1996, pp. 130-147.

by doing, problem-based inquiry and reflection that lead to critical thinking in every subject area.”²² Authors, designers, illustrators and programmers who keep these learning paths in mind are equipped to produce highly motivating and effective resources. Similarly, publishing projects which invite the participation of teachers and learners in different stages of development are more likely to connect with a range of users’ interests, life experiences and learning preferences. In support of such initiatives, UNESCO continues to encourage the integration of good teaching and learning practices into textbooks and learning resources as a way of actively engaging learners as well as enabling teachers to facilitate the development of higher order thinking skills.

In pursuit of the goal of attaining quality of education for all and lifelong learning, UNESCO also intends to collect and distil the results of research in the field of textbook and learning resources development aimed at the production of relevant, inclusive and teacher friendly materials that support active and meaningful learning events and develop the necessary skills for coping with 21st century challenges.

(ii) Encourage efforts to incorporate local and indigenous knowledge, skills and materials as valid resources for achieving curriculum outcomes.

The *UN Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) assures the rights of indigenous peoples to “have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions, providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their culture methods of teaching and learning.”²³ In its role of safeguarding and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, UNESCO is uniquely positioned to support the development and validation of indigenous peoples and other locally originated learning materials, both in service to community based education initiatives and as a means of mainstreaming traditional knowledge systems across ethnic and national boundaries.

Among the noteworthy tools and examples that help guide policies and activities in this area have been undertaken over the last decade, *The Challenge of Indigenous Education: Practice and Perspectives*²⁴ and the *Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme*.²⁵ Integration of inclusive education policies that promote indigenous languages and cultures can have the added effect of improving the quality of learning for all.²⁶

Given the alarming rate of disappearing languages²⁷ and the accompanying loss of local and indigenous knowledge, UNESCO will continue to promote the role of learning resources, both traditional and modern, in preserving linguistic and cultural diversity in the place of global uniformity as well as the availability of quality materials that meet the needs of all learners.

22 *UNESCO Guidelines for Enhancing Learning through Textbooks and Learning Resources* (Paris: 2013) 9.

23 Article 14.1

24 Linda King and Sabine Schielmann. (Paris: UNESCO, 2004).

25 Among its activities, this programme provides training to build local capacities for the transmission of knowledge, including information and communication technologies to record, manage and transmit such knowledge.

26 As with the comprehensive, multi-year Te Kotahitanga research project carried out by the government of New Zealand in cooperation with the University of Waikato.

27 According to a UN Fact Sheet (2008), approximately 600 languages have vanished in the last century and they continue to disappear at the rate of one language every two weeks. Up to 90 percent of the world’s languages are likely to disappear before the end of the 21st century if current trends continue.

4. Strategies for achieving Efficacy as tools for peace and global citizenship

(i) Assist in the development of regional and national policies that promote peace, gender equality, diversity and sustainable development in and through textbooks and learning resources.

The need to find educational pathways toward building a global culture of peace is even more pressing in times of economic instability and political upheaval. As textbook researchers Naumann, Jansen and Franke (2006) have observed, “The production, evaluation and analysis of schoolbooks should increasingly consider global interdependencies and humanity as a whole as the relevant survival unit of the present and the future.”²⁸ Yet, huge obstacles remain. Among these, growing inequalities, mass migration, climate change and violent conflict continue to threaten the vision of a peaceful and sustainable world.

UNESCO’s core mandate to ‘build peace in the minds of men and women’ as applied to strategies for textbooks and learning resources for the 21st century rests on development of skills, attitudes and values embedded in the concept of ‘learning to live together’.²⁹ This multi-dimensional concept of peace building³⁰ embraces a definition of ‘peace’ as more than the absence of war or violence; that is, a broader concept of ‘positive peace’³¹ which, in turn, is an expression of the fundamental dignity of and respect for life.

Gender equality and sustainable development are natural and indispensable components of the concept of peace building, and, as such, are overarching themes which have been affirmed in the context of UNESCO’s work on textbooks and learning resources. For example, *Promoting Gender Equality through Textbooks: A Methodological Guide* (2006) offers textbook developers and researchers the tools to “revise textbooks or use existing textbooks critically, whether in the teacher/learner relationship, among individuals involved in the textbook chain (from design to use), or outside the school in families and communities” in ways that raise awareness and instigate appropriate action. Such tools for authors and publishers are in direct support of the UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which calls for the elimination of “stereotyped concepts of the roles of men and women”³² through, among other channels, the revision of textbooks. Similarly, guides produced under the banner of the Education for Sustainable Development (2004-2014), such as the online resource *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future*,³³ provide advice to curriculum developers and authors of educational materials on how to integrate key themes and issues across subject areas.

28 p. 137

29 As defined in the Delors report

30 In contrast to ‘peace keeping’ and ‘peace making’, the objectives of which are more limited to resolving conflicts and preventing new outbreaks of violence

31 See Johan Galtung. *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

32 CEDAW, 1979, Art. 17

33 A professional development course consisting of 27 modules, accessible at <http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/>

(ii) Support global, regional and/or inter-ethnic consultations on textbooks and learning resources with a view toward challenging negative stereotypes, encouraging multiple perspectives and facilitating intercultural dialogue.

As documented in the revised and updated edition of the *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*,³⁴ the initial orientation of programmatic activity on textbooks undertaken by UNESCO and its partners during the early years was aimed at establishing criteria for the revision and writing of textbooks with the aim of enhancing international and intercultural understanding.³⁵ Based on a model plan developed in the follow-up to the first General Conference in 1946, UNESCO's activities grew into a series of bilateral and multilateral seminars aimed at correcting factual errors as well as omissions and misleading messages leading to negative stereotypes and distorted view of the 'other' in textbooks and learning materials. A multi-stage process which became known as an 'international textbook consultation' was developed in which two or more countries, most often with regional ties, were convened for the purpose of reviewing each other's' textbooks in a particular subject area (most often history, geography and/or civics at secondary level). The objective was to construct a common set of analytical tools, recommendations for revision and, ultimately, cooperation in the development of new materials.

These processes have been continued in recent years, but with broadened geographical boundaries covering a wider range of subject areas, levels and media, partly in response to the impetus to build competencies for global citizenship in a world that "grown together and re-fragmented at new seams."³⁶ With the advent of new media as learning tools, current international research activities³⁷ typically cover non-text learning resources such as multimedia, video documentaries, interactive software and web-based learning resources. International textbook consultations and conferences have the added benefit of bringing together academics, educators and publishers from countries which may have histories of long-standing or periodic conflict with one another, and as such may in themselves become forums for reconciliation and building long term cultures of peace.³⁸

34 Pingel, *Op Cit*

35 *Ibid*, p. 11

36 Schissler, H. (2009) 'Navigating a Globalizing World: Thoughts on Textbook Analysis, Teaching and Learning'. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* v. 1 number 1 Spring, 2009

37 Such as the 'Comparative Study of School Textbooks Project' (2003-2010) coordinated jointly by the French and Moroccan National Commissions to UNESCO in the framework of the Euro-Arab Dialogue.

38 As reflected in the theme of the 9th International Conference of IARTEM, 'Peace, Democratization and Reconciliation in Textbooks and Educational Media', at which the results of research activities from all parts of the world were shared.

IV. Intended Modes of Operation

1. Renewed international dialogue on measures of quality and access

Taking into account the evolving definition of 'textbooks', 'learning materials' and 'learning resources' and their shifting role in teaching and learning, forthcoming activities will seek consensus on updated requirements for quality and access. Whether at global, regional or national level, such conferences should involve all actors in the book chain, from policy-makers, originators, researchers and publishers to teachers, students, parents and learners. Participation and coordination with all concerned with planning for global education in the post-EFA era is fundamental to the relevance of such conferences, as is the involvement of all units within UNESCO engaged in the production and distribution of thematically-oriented learning materials.

Such dialogue would be organized and in close coordination with sister UN organizations, regional textbook networks, research institutes and professional associations in its efforts to seek common frameworks for monitoring the quality of all learning media, including open educational resources (OERs).


2. Increased advocacy and awareness raising on the role of textbooks and learning resources in fostering literacy and enhancing learning throughout life

In countries where plentiful supplies of books, magazines and other reading materials are readily available, the critical role of textbooks in acquiring basic literacy is sometimes overlooked. To build upon foundational literacy and develop lifelong reading habits, learners need continued access not only to textbooks but also to relevant and interesting supplementary reading materials. Books, newspapers, informational pamphlets and other materials printed in local languages that reflect local customs, cultures and concerns are a fundamental ingredient to creating and maintaining literate environments. However, the ability to read and write is only one type of literacy. Given the emerging, multiple applications of the term,³⁹ UNESCO views 'literacy' broadly as a continuum which enables learners to achieve their goals and participate fully in their communities. With the advent of the information age and knowledge societies, technical capacities and infrastructures have also become basic requirements for making a wider array of resources available; however, the ability to critically select, process and use these resources in the construction of quality learning paths is considered to be an extension of print literacy.⁴⁰

Drawing attention to the critical role of textbooks, supplementary reading materials, multimedia and other learning resources in (1) learning to read and (2) developing the reading habit and (3) reading to learn, access information and (4) reading for pleasure and enrichment. Advocacy and awareness of this often neglected factor

39 Such as 'digital literacy', 'media literacy', 'cultural literacy'. For a recent breakdown of literacies considered necessary for life in the 21st century, see National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Position Statement at <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/21stcentdefinition>

40 For an extended discussion of the plurality of literacy, see UNESCO Education Sector Position Paper 'The Plurality of Literacy and its Implications for Policies and Programmes' at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001362/136246e.pdf>



also supports the twin principles of access and quality at all levels of education while, at the same time, drawing attention to the need to support national and local publishing industries as well as to build infrastructures that expand access to broadband, high-speed Internet connectivity.

In the domain of formal basic education and lifelong learning, UNESCO intends to advocate vigorously for the development of national and state/provincial textbook policies with the minimum requirement of 100% distribution of one book per learner for each subject of study for the duration of a learning cycle, course, or school year. Concurrently, UNESCO and its partners in literacy supports the establishment and maintenance of school and community libraries stocked with reading materials that are relevant to the school curriculum and responsive to the learning needs of the community.

3. Focused interventions in support of national, regional and inter-regional efforts to promote peace, global citizenship, gender equality and sustainable development through textbooks and learning resources

It is safe to assume that the general orientation toward attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning will remain high on the list of UNESCO's priorities. In a broader sense, the orientation of education toward "the full development of the human personality," the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms," and the promotion of "understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups", as instructed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)⁴¹, will also endure as guiding principles.

Building upon UNESCO's long tradition of activity in textbook review and revision, such assistance may take the form of supporting international consultations organized to identify, define and problems and ensure that agreed measures are put into practice. The established model for reciprocal analysis and collaborative revision at the regional and subregional levels continues to be used, where appropriate, as a launching pad for raising awareness and producing practical, mutually agreed-upon guidelines for planners, authors, and editors.

For research activities leading toward textbook revision within a national or local system,⁴² the action research model is suggested, in which users of the materials, including learners, parents, and other community members are encouraged to identify problems, discuss options, and make constructive recommendations for revision or the development of new materials. As a modality for implementing quality strategy (ii), above, UNESCO supports the undertaking and exchange of ethnographic studies on the use of traditional knowledge systems and their associated learning media in use among indigenous and minority peoples, including story-telling, dance, drama and visual arts.

4. Customized training and capacity building in all aspects of textbook and learning resources development

The correlation between a well resourced learning environment and success in attaining learning goals is undeniably strong everywhere, but there is an especially strong connection in environments where access to

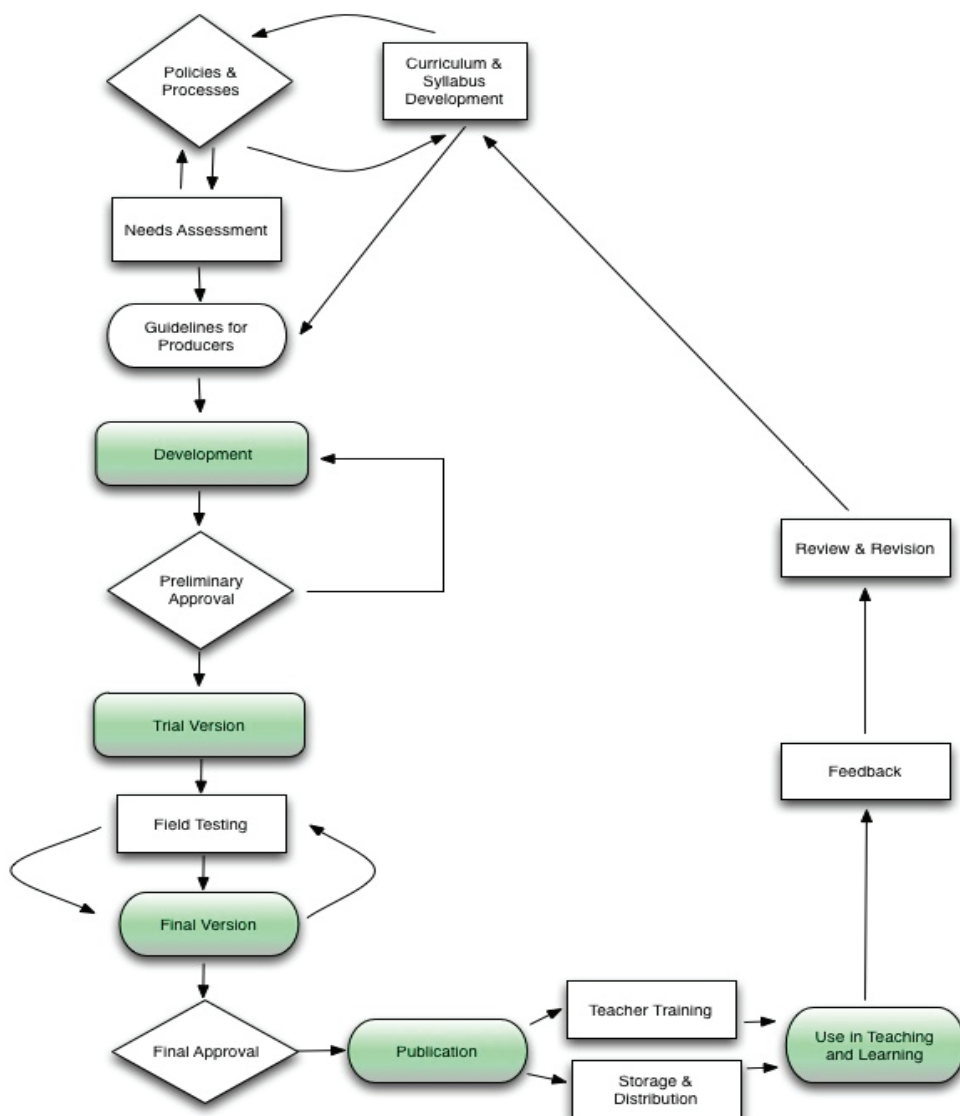
41 UDHR, Article 26.2

42 Often as part of an overall curriculum updating and/reform process


books and information technologies is limited outside of the school or community learning centre. Although significant progress has been achieved, the need for governments to strengthen their capacities to develop relevant curricula and provide quality learning materials in a range of formats persists.

Working at regional, subregional and country level, UNESCO intends to continue and strengthen collaborations with the appropriate authorities to plan technical workshops based on current capacities and actual training needs. Using such tools as the *UNESCO Guidelines on Enhancing Learning through Textbooks and Learning Resources* and the *Training Tool for Authors*,⁴³ workshops will be designed to build concrete skills and infrastructures at all levels of a typical textbook development chain (Figure 3, below).

Figure 3: Prototypical textbook and learning resources development process
Adapted from Askerud (1997), p. 44



43 Among other components of the 'Toolkit on Revision and Adaptation of Curricula, School Textbooks and Other Learning Materials to Remove Cultural, Religious and Gender-biased Stereotypes'



5. Updated platforms and expanded communication channels for sharing research findings, resources, good practices and innovative solutions

To help bridge the gap between theory and practice, UNESCO intends to make use of a variety of formats to extend its outreach in the area of textbooks and learning resources development. Channels for information sharing are expected to include a dedicated web portal, a community of practice (COP) with regular blogs and discussion forums, and a multilingual electronic newsletter for researchers, teachers, textbook authors, publishers and curriculum planners. In addition, UNESCO⁴⁴ expects to continue its key partnerships, in particular with UNICEF, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI), the International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media (IARTEM) the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the Arab Bureau of Education in the Gulf States (ABEGS), the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), the Council of Europe and the Islamic Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ISESCO), among others,⁴⁵ to gather and share new information and best practices through their extensive networks, conferences and publications.

44 Also with with and through the UNESCO Bureau of Education (IBE), the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

45 See Section 7 for a complete list

V. Priorities

"In almost all my visits to areas ravaged by war and disaster, the plea of survivors is the same: "Education first." Education helps to re-establish normalcy for traumatized children and sets the stage for lasting stability.

We must answer this legitimate request. We cannot afford to waste the talents of a generation. We must provide safe learning environments, text books, support for parents, transportation to school and training for teachers."

Ban Ki-Moon

Despite the many advances made education systems around the globe to provide a quality education for all, it has become clear that this goal remains elusive. In some areas, particularly those hit heavily by population growth, poverty, and protracted conflict, progress has actually stalled or is reversing. As of 2012, 61 million children worldwide were not in school, and of those who were enrolled, around half drop out before they complete primary level.⁴⁶ Measures of the quality of learning are also not encouraging. Of those who do have access, recent studies show that at least 200 million are unable to read after several years of schooling. While overall literacy rates have improved in some countries, in others, "growing populations, maturing illiterate youth and the marginalization of women and girls will continue to hinder progress."⁴⁷

In anticipation of a well coordinated and vigorous post-2015 EFA agenda for education that will closely coordinate with *Education First*,⁴⁸ the UN Secretary-General's five-year global education initiative launched in 2013 established three distinct priorities:

- Expand access to education;
- Improve the quality of learning;
- Foster global citizenship.

Noting the natural confluence between *Education First priorities* and the three key principles upon which this policy statement is based, present and future directions for textbooks and learning resources reflect the lessons from road already travelled. However, these priorities also call for broader interpretations and more comprehensive approaches in the context of today's global challenges and opportunities. Therefore, drawing upon the lessons of the past but also looking toward the future, policy makers at all levels are urged to consider the following priorities:

46 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012

47 See UIS (2012), *Adult and Youth Literacy: Analysis of data for 41 Selected Countries for a detailed account* <http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Documents/UIS-literacy-statistics-1990-2015-en.pdf>

48 Education First: An Initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General. New York: UN, 2012 <http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/index.html>

1. Plentiful and sustainable supplies of high quality textbooks and learning resources equitably distributed in areas of greatest need

Regional priorities for achieving equitable access to textbooks and learning resources are sub-Saharan Africa, where half of the world's out-of-school children live and South and West Asia, which also has weak enrolment numbers and strikingly low literacy rates among girls and women. In situations of emergency, where the demand far outpaces the development or reconstruction of the supply system, priority should be given to the immediate provision of teaching-learning materials in coordination with the implementation in support of existing or quickly constructed teaching-learning processes and curricula.⁴⁹

2. Enhanced effectiveness of all learning media as engaging, multi-modal tools for quality learning

Expansion of the range of learning media to include print, electronic and web-based resources, to effectively equip and empower learners with the knowledge and skills they need for life and work in the 21st century. Top priorities for assistance in quality improvement are poorly resourced systems, hard-to-reach populations, and schools with abnormally high repetition and dropout rates.

3. Integration of core competencies for global citizenship

Emphasis on peace building, gender equality, sustainable development and related themes with the desired outcome of building mutual respect among peoples of different faiths, outlooks and ways of life. Priority for programmatic action in textbook revision rests with countries and regions in different stages recovery following conflict, focusing on processes of analysis, review and revision of textbooks and learning resources as an avenue toward reconciliation and sustainable peace.

⁴⁹ See the *Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Toolkit for guidance notes on the selection, dissemination and use of teaching and learning materials in situations of crisis*. <http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit>

VI. Issues and Challenges

1. Resistance to change

Even in the best of times, provision of quality textbooks and learning resources in support of inclusive, quality education for all is a challenging and time-consuming undertaking. As with curriculum development, a system for producing, distributing and using materials that support teachers and actively engage learners is not static, but a dynamic process that is constantly under review and revision. Today, more than ever, it is imperative for such systems to 'keep up', to adapt even more quickly and flexibly to innovations in teaching and learning methods, media, assessment and outcomes.


Meaningful, constructive change requires openness to new ideas and approaches and acceptance of innovations from all levels, including those initiated by teachers, parents and communities. It also requires a smoothly functioning apparatus for management of production, selection and review processes as well as for professional development of authors, illustrators, designers, editors, and teachers to produce quality materials and resources. Resistance to change on the part of policy makers, teachers, and others invested in an education system may arise from a lack of trust in new technologies to deliver learning of at least equivalent quality as traditional textbooks used in traditional ways. Such resistance can only be overcome in time with the help of valid and compelling research evidence, which in turn will inform curriculum developers and planners on how best to achieve a suitable balance between old and new media in service to quality learning.

Another barrier to the transformation from post-colonial, centralized and static systems of textbook provision to modern, more adaptive schemes in developing countries results from long-term dependency on external resources and expertise as well as an over-reliance on textbooks in general. For example, when an imported supply of textbooks is procured from an international publisher, with only superficial adaptations to local needs and conditions, it may be years or even decades before the country engages in capacity building activities that enable a locally developed and updated supply to be established. In such situations, it is not uncommon for the textbooks themselves to dictate the content of lessons, or even to become the curriculum, leaving little or no space for local control over what is taught and how it is learned.

2. Conflicting government priorities

It is highly recommended that a carefully planned policy for textbooks and learning resources based on sound educational principles be a major component a country's national plan for meeting the 2015 goals and responding to new priorities in the post-EFA era.

Planning for textbook production and distribution that does not take sustainability into account may develop the capacity to produce textbooks with high surface qualities such as fourcolour printing, appealing illustrations, high grade durable paper and hard covers, but these may be of poor quality in that they may not match the level or cultural environment of the students, may easily be gender biased, or may be irrelevant to the cultural context of learners.



Another obstacle may have to do with the tension between the central and the local authorities over the control of the content. This may result in the eventual stagnation or marginalization of promising local initiatives to produce materials in indigenous languages and to mainstream traditional knowledge into the broader curriculum of a state or nation. Textbook policies that maintain strict control over production and printing capacities also have economic consequences. If there are no avenues for local publishing houses to be engaged in the production and distribution of textbooks and learning resources, the potential for developing and sustaining a supply of books and reading materials to the wider society is also significantly diminished.

3. Weak capacities and lack of resources

Perhaps the greatest challenge to countries seeking to improve quality and expand access to textbooks and learning resources is that of weak capacities on the part of both public and private sectors to develop, manage and sustain the supply chain. Obstructions to production and distribution are also presented by such physical factors as impassable terrain, climatic conditions, absence of adequate storage facilities and sheer distance. Existing capacities to produce and distribute materials are further weakened by lack of access to technical equipment and supplies that could help solve at least the most debilitating problems. For example, outdated offset press machines donated decades ago to government-run production facilities in some of the world's poorest countries are now impossible to refurbish, while newer, more mobile and environmentally friendly printing technology has yet to be supplied.

Lack of reliable access to ICT in developing countries also presents an ever-increasing barrier to innovative solutions, both to production of learning media and to learning itself. A recent report by the Broadband Commission Working Group on Education⁵⁰ states that in African countries, 150 students must share a single computer, while fewer than 20% have access to the Internet outside of school. In comparison, 93% of students have access to the Internet at school, and in Korea, home access is even higher at home than it is at school. Until vigorous measures are taken to close the digital divide, and textbook producers, teachers and learners even in the world's most remote areas are able to take advantage of the burgeoning and rich mass of freely available open educational resources, there is little hope of fulfilling the enduring promise of quality education for all.

⁵⁰ *Technology, Broadband and Education: Enhancing the EFA Agenda*. Paris: UNESCO and ITU, 2013

VII. Partnerships

1. Other UN agencies

Other UN agencies, notably UNICEF, UNHCR, and UNRWA have long been active in aiding governments in the curriculum development and provision of textbooks and other learning materials, especially in emergency relief efforts. UNICEF has been particularly concerned with curriculum and textbook revision with regard to issues of gender bias and violence prevention in situations of ongoing and post-conflict, while UN Women, created in 2010, has already produced a number of training materials and toolkits for mainstreaming gender issues into school curricula and literacy programmes. The World Bank has also been involved in textbook provision and quality improvement in UNESCO will continue to strengthen its partnerships with these agencies by identifying areas of continued collaboration and cooperation in the planning, funding, and implementation of its programmes.

2. International associations, networks, and the private sector

UNESCO will reinforce existing ties and seek to create new ones with international organizations, associations and research institutes which promote principles of peace and global citizenship through education, including (but not limited to):

- American Textbook Council
- Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS)
- Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)
- Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
- Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU)
- Council of Europe
- European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations (EUROCLIO)
- Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI)
- International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media (IARTEM)
- International Reading Association (IRA)
- International Network for Research into Gendered Representations in Textbooks (Réseau internationale de recherche sur les représentations sexuées dans les manuels scolaires – RIRRS)
- International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
- International Reading Association (IRA)
- Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
- Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)

UNESCO will also explore the possibilities for establishing additional mutually beneficial partnerships with publishing houses, software developers, and others who are interested in contributing to its quality improvement initiatives. The 'Training Tool for Authors' and 'International Guidelines for Enhancing Quality Education through Textbooks and Learning Resources' will also be made available to developers in the private sector, and the participation of all will be invited in its global and regional information sharing networks.

Annex: Historical Overview

In the period of reconstruction in Europe following World War II, the founding members of UNESCO sought to build upon the earlier work of the League of Nations by creating a set of criteria for developing and revising textbooks with a view toward enhancing international understanding.⁵¹ Also, in the post-war period, UNESCO organized a series of seminars aimed toward developing an awareness of the multiplicity of regions and cultures in the world as presented in the textbooks of the industrialized nations. With the onset of the Cold War and the growing division between the industrialized and the developing world, UNESCO and its partners focused more on developing strategies and materials for developing multiperspectivity,⁵² especially in the learning of history. Using this strategy, historical narratives are viewed from more than one perspective, requiring learners to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to interpret events on their own, taking into account the perspective of the 'other'.

Since 1974, UNESCO has strongly encouraged activities involving the reciprocal study and revision of textbooks and other learning materials. This general approach evolved primarily from a recommendation made at the 18th session of the General Conference for incorporating universally shared values in the development and revision of all educational materials "in order to ensure that they are accurate, balanced, up-to-date, unprejudiced, and will enhance mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples."⁵³ These activities led to awareness of the need for a more global approach to the way problems are presented in textbooks while, at the same time, respecting local interpretations and views. By the late nineteen eighties, the approach had broadened to acknowledge the necessity of a more participatory paradigm for textbook research involving not only the creators but also the users of the materials. Significantly, these methods tend to give equal weight to the transmission of knowledge, attitudes and skills, including those for 'learning to live together'.

In response to new outbreaks of civil conflict and the rise of global terrorism in the last decades of the 20th century, UNESCO again placed high priority on developing educational and cultural programmes aimed at promoting mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity. A resolution adopted at the 31st session of the General Conference in 2001 called for the promotion of dialogue predicated upon "the unity of humankind and commonly shared values, the recognition of its cultural diversity and the equal dignity of each civilization and each culture."⁵⁴ In reflection upon the intentions of framers of Universal Declaration of Human Rights in articulating the direction education should take, and the expressions of world concern over textbooks in the first General Conference, it is clear that learning media both old and new are now well understood as major players in the pathway to peace and global citizenship.

Examples of key UNESCO Resolutions, Recommendations and Declarations on Textbooks and Learning Materials

1 C/res. 6: Improvement of textbooks and teaching materials, 1946

For the purpose of fostering international understanding and removing certain sources of misunderstanding and improving other teaching materials, the following activities will be undertaken during 1947:

51 For a more detailed account, see Pingel, op cit, p. 11-16

52 For a full explanation of this approach, see Stradling, Robert, *Multiperspectivity in History Teaching: A Guide for Teachers* Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003

53 UNESCO 18th General Conference (1974), Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms

54 31 C/res. 39 adopted at the 11th plenary meeting on 20 October, 2001

- (i) draft a model method of text-book analysis, including the development of principles by which Member States might analyze their own text-books and teaching materials.
- (ii) Compile an annotated list of existing bilateral or regional agreements on text-book revision.
- (iii) Collect at UNESCO House samples of textbooks commonly used in various countries for the teaching of history, geography, civics and other subjects related to international understanding.
- (iv) Organize and initiate a study of the treatment of international co-operation in these textbooks.

6 C/1.311/1.316: Improvement of textbooks and teaching materials, 1951

The Director-General is authorized to stimulate Member States, in the light of the seminars previously held on this subject, to proceed with the revision of their history and geography textbooks, particularly through either bilateral or multilateral arrangements.

18 C Item 24: Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, 1974

Member States should increase their efforts to facilitate the renewal, production, dissemination and exchange of equipment and materials for international education, giving special consideration to the fact that in many countries pupils and students receive most of their knowledge about international affairs through the mass media outside of school. To meet the needs expressed by those concerned with international education, efforts should be concentrated on overcoming the lack of teaching aids and improving their quality.

24 C/res 13 1.2 (c) ii: Peace, international understanding, human rights and the rights of peoples, 1987

The General Conference invites the Director-General, in particular: (vii) to foster the development of bilateral and multilateral agreements between Member States for the reciprocal study and revision of text books and other educational materials in order to ensure that they are accurate, balanced, up-to-date and unprejudiced and will enhance mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples, as stipulated in the 1974 Recommendation, and to provide technical support to Member States for this purpose.

28 C/res. 5: Declaration and integrated framework of action on education for peace, human rights and democracy, 1995

Teaching materials and resources:

18. All people engaged in educational action must have adequate teaching materials and resources at their disposal. In this connection, it is necessary to make the necessary revision of textbooks to remove negative stereotypes and distorted views of 'the other'. International co-operation in producing textbooks could be encouraged. Whenever new teaching materials, textbooks and the like are to be produced, they should be designed with due consideration of new situations. The textbook should offer different perspectives on a given subject and make transparent the national or cultural background against which they are written. Their content should be based on scientific findings. Distance education technologies and all modern communication tools must be placed at the service of education for peace, human rights and democracy.

29 C/res. 38: Toward a culture of peace, 1997

(c) to give a fresh impulse to developing innovations in school curricula and educational contents and methods; to encourage the conclusion of agreements between neighbouring countries, or countries in conflict, for the revision of school textbooks on history and geography; and continue to support the development of the network of UNESCO Chairs for peace, human rights and democracy and of the UNESCO International Network of Textbook Research Institutes.

31 C/res. 3.B.I.2.1: Toward a new approach to quality education, 2001

The General Conference authorises the Director-General:

- (a) to implement the corresponding plan of action in order to:
 - promote a new approach to quality education as outlined in the Delors report by emphasizing the acquisition of values, attitudes and skills needed to face the challenges of contemporary society, sustainable development and globalization, with a clear focus on human rights education, the reform of curricula and textbook revision, and the Associated Schools Project (ASP).

35 C: Highlights of the Ministerial Round Table on Education, 2009

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are drivers of globalization. They hold enormous potential but their rapid development runs the risk of further digging the digital divide. Inclusion is also about ensuring access to these new tools that are revolutionizing how we learn and gain access to information. Several countries shared ICT initiatives, from connecting secondary schools to developing e-learning materials and using ICTs in teacher training.

36 C/5 Programme 3: Scaling up equity, inclusion and quality in education and lifelong learning for sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence

- (iii) support Member States to equip learners to become responsible global citizens through addressing issues such as sustainable development, including climate change, HIV education and human rights and universal values in both the content and delivery of education.



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