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UNESCO'S ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO POPULATION

by

Population and Family Planning  
Section

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND  
CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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Prepared for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, African  
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## POPULATION PROGRAMME

Summary of activities in 1970-711. Background

The work of Unesco in relation to population is centred round education in the broad sense of that term. There is ample evidence that the effective implementation of any measures designed to deal with the dynamics of population necessitates a certain degree of instruction, and that the prerequisite to the acceptance of such measures is an awareness in the minds of citizens of the implications of rapid population growth and an ability to understand and weigh the alternatives raised by those implications.

Unesco tries to show that the several possible courses of action involve pre-eminently questions relating to the quality of life and the dignity of the individual. Seen in this broad perspective, Unesco's rôle in respect to what is called the population problem has implications for, and demands the involvement of, a very large number of the professional specializations which are represented in the various units of the secretariat; among them Curriculum and Teacher Training; Out-of-School Education; Social Sciences; Mass Communications; Environment; Culture.

Unesco is thus concerned with many facets of population issues. Its concerns - increasingly multi-disciplinary - are with man, individually and collectively, his welfare and development. It is within this framework that, in 1967, the Executive Board endorsed broad perspectives for a 10-year programme proposed by the Director-General in accordance with instructions by Unesco's General Conference, and its fourteenth session in 1966. <sup>1/</sup> The General Conference gave further definition to these at its fifteenth and sixteenth sessions in 1968 and 1970 <sup>2/</sup>, (the texts of the General Conference resolutions of 1968 and 1970 are given in Appendix I). A unit was established in the Department of School and Higher Education at the beginning of 1969, to co-ordinate programmes on a house-wide basis. Funds were obtained from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) to meet infrastructure costs of the unit and to fund advisory missions to Central America and the Caribbean, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and the United Arab Republic. Regular budget and technical assistance funds provided for two consultant meetings in the fields of education and mass communications and for continuation of the long-term social science study programme. By the end of the year, a first outline of possible activities, depending largely on the availability of UNFPA

<sup>1/</sup> 14 C/Resolution 3.252 (1966), and 77 EX/Decisions 4.4.1 (November 1967).

<sup>2/</sup> 15 C/Resolution 1.241 (1968) and 16 C/Resolution 7.25 (1970).

funding, was established for the following five years. Within this, proposals were formulated for projects in 1970, covering education, communication, social science and natural science activities.

2. Activities in 1970-71

1970 was the first year of full activity by the UNFPA. Allocations were received from the Fund at intervals throughout the year, in response to the proposals mentioned above. The allocations provided for continuing and further infrastructure costs and for education consultants to the Asian Institute for Teacher Educators at Quezon City in the Philippines, the Regional Centre for Functional Literacy in Rural Areas for the Arab States (ASFEC), Unesco's Regional Educational Planning Centres and sections, and to the Regional Offices for Education at Bangkok and Santiago. Programme activities funded by UNFPA in 1970 included advisory missions to Member States, regional training courses in population education and mass communications in Asia, a regional survey and advisory meeting on population education in Latin America, and assistance to a national seminar on population education in Indonesia.

For 1971, funds have been requested from UNFPA for a programme covering advisory services, meetings, studies and project development in UNESCO's programme sector. During the year, regional and headquarters infrastructure has been further strengthened, e.g. by the appointment at Headquarters of a demographer to fill a vacant regular budget post. Further regular budget and technical assistance monies provide for modest additional activities, among them a project to help define the role of social science in Unesco's population programme and to outline a consequential action programme.

With specific reference to Africa, activities to date have centred on Unesco's Regional Office at Dakar, and have in consequence had more a regional than a specifically national focus. Based on an investigation of the mutual relationships between population dynamics and educational opportunity, a consultant to the Dakar Office has drawn up a proposed programme of studies and courses on these matters which might be undertaken by the Dakar Office. A long-term expert to carry out these duties is now under recruitment.

A second consultant is at present attached to the Dakar Office, assisting the preparation of a small meeting of experts from different countries of the region, to explore the possibility of introducing into school and out-of-school curricula matters dealing with population dynamics and their relationship to development. The meeting will take place at the end of October, at the Regional Office.

Unesco's programme in population was described to the first regional inter-Agency Co-ordination Meeting on Population organized by the Economic Commission for Africa in January 1971, in co-operation with the United Nations Population Division, and the UNFPA.

### Conclusions

In all its efforts, Unesco seeks to ensure that population activities should reflect understanding of and sensitivity to the widely varying social and cultural traditions in different countries, which condition the nature and direction of national population policies. In ethical terms, the programme is concerned with the actual and potential conflict between demographic situations and the welfare and development goals - individual, social, national, international and global - the achievement of which the Organization was established to foster. In functional terms, the programme attempts (a) to ensure that population variables are taken into account in planning and implementing social policies, and (b) to support policies and programmes designed to influence population variables. In terms of content, education and communication are at present receiving considerable emphasis from Member States.

1.24 Population and family planning

1.241 The General Conference,

Bearing in mind the resolution on human rights aspects of family planning, adopted on 12 May 1968 at the International Conference on Human Rights in Teheran,

Recalling that the United Nations Economic and Social Council, at its 43rd session, urged all organizations, within their frame of reference to develop and render more effective their programmes in the field of population, including training, research information and advisory services,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1347(XLV) on population and its relation to economic and social development, in which the Council inter alia, welcomed the decision of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to establish a sub-committee on population, and called for intensified action in co-operation with the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to improve co-ordination and avoid duplication,

Recalling further that in particular Unesco was invited to pursue actively its education, social sciences and mass media activities in this regard, and

Recalling the decision by the Executive Board at its 77th session concerning the development of a ten-year programme for collecting and encouraging the exchange of information on the inclusion of instruction on population questions in school curricula, as well as a programme for encouraging and assisting national mass communication agencies to develop their resources with a view to informing the public about population matter,

Noting the establishment of a Working Group on Population composed of representatives of the Secretariats of the United Nations, ILO, FAO, Unesco, WHO and Unicef,

Convinced that such close co-operation is of the utmost importance in programming population activities because of the multi-disciplinary character of these subjects, and that co-ordination should be extended to include non-governmental organizations such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, as well as bilateral programmes of co-operation,

Conscious of the need for including instruction on population questions in school courses, of expanding the opportunities for training of teachers and communication personnel in this field of including family planning in all relevant curricula, and of developing technical manuals on the application of communication methods in family planning programmes; stressing the necessity that all these forms of instruction should lay special emphasis on the socio-cultural implications of these activities,

Noting with satisfaction that, in 1969-1970, assistance will be given to Member States, at their request, under the Programme of Participation in Member States Activities, in planning and conducting their activities in the fields of population and family planning and, in particular, to Member States in Asia with respect to the planning and use of mass media for national population and family planning programmes,

1. Declares that the purpose of Unesco's activities in the field of population should be to promote a better understanding of the serious responsibilities which population growth imposes on individuals, nations and the whole international community, in the context of respect for human rights, the people's ethical convictions, the needs of Member States for development, and the promotion of international co-operation,
2. Considers, therefore, that Unesco should act with due regard to the diversity of national situations and thus avoid any tendency to adopt uniform policies and procedures in regard to population policy and family planning,
3. Invites the Director-General:
  - (a) to further co-operation with other international governmental or non-governmental organizations by offering the services of Unesco within the fields of population and family planning, with special emphasis on the socio-cultural implications thereof,
  - (b) to avoid any overlapping activities with other United Nations bodies,
4. Authorizes the Director-General to receive from Member States and the appropriate international organizations all possible voluntary aid in the form of specific financial contributions and the services of experts in Unesco's areas of work,
5. Invites the Director-General to continue his endeavour to render all possible assistance by Unesco to Member States in the fields of population and family planning which come within its competence,

6. Instructs the Director-General to prepare the Secretariat to meet in a co-ordinated manner the urgent demands from Member States within the fields of population and family planning:
- (a) within Education:
    - (i) by helping in the development of teaching materials, curricula, teacher training, adult education, women's education, community education, etc;
    - (ii) by studying the possibilities of including an educational pilot project on family planning in the experimental literacy programme;
  - (b) within Social Sciences by carrying out studies on the different aspects of population and family planning, so as to establish the intellectual base for understanding the complexity of family planning in the context of various cultures;
  - (c) within Communication:
    - (i) by studying ways for the establishment and operation of efficient programmes within the fields of population and family planning;
    - (ii) by providing relevant information and documentation.



Records of the General Conference, Sixteenth Session,  
Paris 1970. Resolutions.

POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING

No. 7.25 The General Conference

Bearing in mind Unesco's fundamental commitment to the dignity of man and the fact that the ultimate objective of development is the well-being of man,

Authorizes the Director-General to include in the future draft programmes activities relating to population and family planning to be carried out within the competence of Unesco and in co-operation with other competent international organizations, which would aim at:

- (a) assisting Member States, on request, in the elaboration of population and family planning policies whose principles they have adopted in the full exercise of their rights and responsibilities;
- (b) executing integrated studies based on existing knowledge of demographic situations of regions or countries in order to make available to Member States data regarding the highly complex differences in various demographic situations, with reference to the equally complex interaction between demographic evolution and education, science and culture, and thereby help in creating better understanding between countries of the various problems and approaches involved;
- (c) setting up a programme of studies on the interrelationships between population development and the human rights directly affecting population.