

# The Task of Unifying the World Mind

## UNESCO Its Purpose and Its Philosophy Part 2

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Theme: [Science and Medicine, United Nations](#)

✘ As the first Director of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), Sir Julian Sorell Huxley (1887-1975) wrote a paper entitled *UNESCO Its Purpose and Its Philosophy* (1946) [1] in which he outlined his vision for the newly created international organisation (which grew out of the League of Nations' Institute of Intellectual Co-operation). According to Huxley, the guiding philosophy of UNESCO should be what he termed, World Evolutionary Humanism. The [previous article](#) in this series described this philosophy and its relation to eugenics. This article will outline the purpose of UNESCO, which is to mentally prepare the world for global political unification under a single world government. It will also introduce the broad reach of tools and techniques at UNESCO's disposal under the banners of Education, Science and Culture.

Julian Huxley, an evolutionary biologist, humanist, and ardent internationalist held many titles including: Secretary of the Zoological Society of London (1935-42), first president of the British Humanist Association (1963), Vice-President (1937-44) and President (1959-62) of the British Eugenics Society. He was also a founding member of the World Wild Life Fund, coined the term "transhumanism" (as a means of disguising eugenics) and gave two Galton memorial lectures (1936, 1962). Huxley also received many awards including the Darwin Medal of the Royal Society (1956), UNESCO's Kalinga Prize (1953) and the Special Award of the Lasker Foundation in the category Planned Parenthood - World Population (1959) to name but a few. He is also the Grandson of Thomas Huxley (Darwin's Bulldog) and brother of author Aldous Huxley.

### Facilitating World Government

From *UNESCO Its Purpose and Its Philosophy*:

[*Italicised text* is original emphasis and **bolded text** is added by author.]

"In general, Unesco must constantly be testing its policies against the touchstone of evolutionary progress. A central conflict of our times is that between nationalism and internationalism, between the concept of many national sovereignties and one world sovereignty. Here the evolutionary touchstone gives an unequivocal answer. The key to man's advance, the distinctive method which has made evolutionary progress in the human sector so much more rapid than in the biological and has given it higher and more satisfying goals, is the fact of cumulative tradition, the existence of a common pool of ideas which is self-perpetuating and itself capable of evolving. And this fact has had the immediate consequence of making the type of social organisation the main factor in human progress or at least its limiting

framework.

Two obvious corollaries follow. First, that the more united man's tradition becomes, the more rapid will be the possibility of progress: several separate or competing or even mutually hostile pools of tradition **cannot possibly be so efficient as a single pool common to all mankind**. And secondly, that the best and only certain way of securing this will be through **political unification**. As history shows, unifying ideas can exert an effect across national boundaries. But, as history makes equally evident, that effect is a partial one and never wholly offsets the opportunities for conflict provided by the existence of separate sovereign political units.

The moral for Unesco is clear. The task laid upon it of promoting peace and security can never be wholly realised through the means assigned to it - education, science and culture. **It must envisage some form of world political unity, whether through a single world government or otherwise**, as the only certain means for avoiding war. However, world political unity is, unfortunately, a remote ideal, and in any case does not fall within the field of Unesco's competence. This does not mean that Unesco cannot do a great deal towards promoting peace and security. Specifically, **in its educational programme it can stress the ultimate need for world political unity and familiarise all peoples with the implications of the transfer of full sovereignty from separate nations to a world organization**. But, more generally, it can do a great deal to **lay the foundations on which world political unity can later be built**. It can help the peoples of the world to mutual understanding and to a realisation of the common humanity and common tasks which they share, as opposed to the nationalisms which too often tend to isolate and separate them." - 13

"With all this Unesco must face the fact that nationalism is still the basis of the political structure of the world, and must be prepared for the possibility that the forces of disruption and conflict may score a temporary victory. But even if this should occur, Unesco must strain every nerve to give a demonstration of the benefits, spiritual as well as material, to be obtained through a common pool of tradition, and specifically by international co-operation in education, science, and culture, so that even should another war break out, Unesco may survive it, and in any case so that the world will not forget." - 14

"[The UNESCO constitution] draws the notable conclusion, never before embodied in an official document, that a peace "based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments" would be inadequate, since it could not "secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world," and that "the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the **intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind**." " - 5

"As we have seen earlier, the unifying of traditions in a single common pool of experience, awareness, and purpose is the necessary prerequisite for further major progress in human evolution. Accordingly, although political unification in some sort of world government will be required for the definitive attainment of this stage, **unification in the things of the mind is not only also necessary but can pave the way for other types of unification**. Thus in the past the **great religions** unified the thoughts and attitudes of large regions of the earth's surface; and in **recent times science**, both directly through its ideas and indirectly through its applications in shrinking the globe, **has been a powerful factor in directing men's thoughts to the possibilities of, and the need for, full world unity**.

Special attention should consequently be given by Unesco to the problem of constructing a unified pool of tradition for the human species as a whole. This, as indicated elsewhere, must include the unity-in-variety of the world's art and culture as well as the promotion of one single pool of scientific knowledge. But

it must also eventually include a unified common outlook and a common set of purposes. **This will be the latest part of the task of unifying the world mind**; but Unesco must not neglect it while engaged on the easier jobs, like that of promoting a single pool of scientific knowledge and effort." - 17

## UNESCO's Reach - Education

"Unesco - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation - is by its title committed to two sets of aims. In the first place, it is international, and must serve the ends and objects of the United Nations, which in the long perspective are world ends, ends for humanity as a whole. And secondly it must foster and promote all aspects of education, science, and culture, in the **widest sense of those words.**" - 5

"It [education] is the process by means of which knowledge, skill, technique, understanding, ideas, emotional and spiritual attitudes, are transmitted from individual to individual and from generation to generation. It is also a major part of the process by which the latent potentialities of the individual are actualised and developed to their fullest extent. It includes the broad sense of adult education and self-education as well as the narrow sense of schooling and training. It is a special field with its own methods, an art which is in process of substituting a scientific basis for an empirical or an a priori one. But the scientific basis of education has not yet been fully explored, and what has already been discovered is neither widely enough known nor widely enough applied. Furthermore, it is a field which has never yet been adequately cultivated on the international level, and one whose international possibilities can still hardly be guessed at.

These things being so, it becomes clear that the approach of Unesco must adopt certain general principles concerning education - not only that it should equip the growing human being to earn a livelihood, not only that it should fit him to take his place as a member of the community and society into which he is born, but certain further principles, which have been lacking in many previous (and existing) systems of education.

First, that education can be and should be a permanent and continuing process; the mind is capable of growth throughout life, and provision must be made for assisting its growth - in other words for education - among adults of all ages and not only in children and young people.

Next, that education has a social as well as an individual function[...]

Thirdly, that scientific research is capable of **improving the technique of education** to a very large extent, and that accordingly Unesco must give every encouragement to research in this field, and to the full dissemination of its results.

Further, since the world to-day is in process of **becoming one, and since a major aim of Unesco must be to help in the speedy and satisfactory realisation of this process**, that Unesco must pay special attention to international education - to **education as a function of a world society**, in addition to its functions in relation to national societies, to regional or religious or intellectual groups, or to local communities." - 29

For more about UNESCO's application of education please read part 3 of this series entitled: [Education for World Government](#).

## UNESCO's Reach - Science and Culture

“Unesco by definition and title, must be concerned with Education, with Science, and with Culture; and under its constitution it is expressly charged to concern itself also with the spread of information through all media of Mass Communication - in other words, the press, the cinema, the radio and television.

We must now take these major subjects and see how they should be approached and treated by Unesco. But before doing so, one or two general points should be underlined. In the first place, it is obvious that Science is not to be taken in the narrow sense in which it is sometimes employed in the English-speaking countries, as denoting the Mathematical and the Natural Sciences only, but **as broadly as possible, to cover all the primarily intellectual activities of man, the whole range of knowledge and learning**. This, then, includes the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences, and the Humanities - in the logical German terminology, Naturwissenschaft, Sozialwissenschaft, and Geisteswissenschaft. It thus runs from mathematics to theology, from physics to philosophy, and includes such subjects as history and sociology, archaeology and the study of classical literatures, as well as chemistry or bacteriology, geology or social psychology. And, as we shall see in a moment, Unesco must consider all the applications of knowledge as well as its pure pursuit.

The word Culture too is used broadly in our title. First of all it embraces creative art, including literature and architecture as well as music and the dance, painting and the other visual arts; and, once more, the applications of art, in the form of decoration, industrial design, certain aspects of town-planning and landscaping, and so forth. Then it can be used in the sense of **cultivation of the mind** - directed towards the development of its interests and faculties, acquaintance with the artistic and intellectual achievements both of our own and of past ages, some knowledge of history, some familiarity with ideas and the handling of ideas, a certain capacity for good judgment, critical sense, and independent thinking. In this sphere, we can speak of a high or a low level of culture in a community. And finally it can be employed in the broadest sense of all, the anthropological or sociological one, as denoting **the entire material and mental apparatus characteristic of a particular society**.

It is clear that Unesco must concern itself with the arts, as indispensable agencies both of individual and social expression, and for the full development and enrichment of personality. It must also concern itself with the level of culture in the second sense, since, cultural backwardness, like scientific or educational backwardness, are a drag on the rest of the world and an obstacle to the progress that we desire.” - 25

For more on the use of science and culture to manipulate society in a desired direction please read part 4 of this series entitled: [Guiding Society Through Art and Science](#).

## UNESCO's Reach - The Mass Media

“There are thus two tasks for the Mass Media division of Unesco, the one general, the other special. The special one is to **enlist the press and the radio and the cinema to the fullest extent** in the service of formal and adult education, of science and learning, of art and culture. The general one is to see that these agencies are used both to contribute to mutual comprehension between different nations and cultures, and also to **promote**

**the growth of a common outlook** shared by all nations and cultures.” – 60

For more on UNESCO’s use of the mass media and other forms of communication on the public mind, please read the final article in this series entitled: [The Mass Media Division of UNESCO](#).

[1] Quotes from Julian Huxley, *UNESCO Its Purpose and Its Philosophy* (1946). Preparatory Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. [pdf from UNESCO](#).

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