INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEXAS/ OSGOOD CENTER
LONE STAR MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2023 (LSMUN)
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)
Background Guide
Richardson, Texas / November 4-5, 2023

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It contributes to peace and security by promoting international cooperation in education, sciences, culture, communication, and information. UNESCO promotes knowledge sharing and the free flow of ideas to accelerate mutual understanding and a more perfect knowledge of each other's lives. UNESCO's programs contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the 2030 Agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

As early as 1942, in wartime, the governments of the European countries, which were confronting Nazi Germany and its allies, met in the United Kingdom for the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME). World War II was far from over, yet those countries were looking for ways and means to rebuild their education systems once peace was restored. The project quickly gained momentum and soon acquired a universal character. New governments, including that of the United States, decided to join in. Upon the proposal of CAME, a United Nations Conference for the establishment of an educational and cultural organization (ECO/CONF) was convened in London from 1 to 16 November 1945. Scarcely had the war ended when the conference opened. It gathered representatives of forty-four countries who decided to create an organization that would embody a genuine culture of peace. In their eyes, the new organization was to establish the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" an

UNESCO is an autonomous organization affiliated with the UN through a relationship agreement signed in 1946. **Its three principal organs are the General Conference, the Executive Board, and the secretariat, headed by a director-general.**

The General Conference

The General Conference consists of the representatives of UNESCO's Member States. It meets every two years, and is attended by Member States and Associate Members, together with observers for non-Member States, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). **Each country has one vote, irrespective of its size or the extent of its contribution to the budget.**

The General Conference determines the policies and the main lines of work of the Organization. Its duty is to set the programmes and the budget of UNESCO. It also elects the Members of the Executive Board and appoints, every four years, the Director-General. The working languages of the General Conference are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

All UNESCO members have the right to be represented in the General Conference, which determines UNESCO's policies and decides on its major undertakings. Each member state has one vote in the conference but may be represented by five delegates. The constitution of UNESCO requires that member governments are to consult with national educational, scientific, and cultural bodies before selecting these delegates; in countries where UNESCO commissions have been established, these too are to be consulted.

From 1946 through 1952, the General Conference met every year. Since then it has met generally every two years. As a rule, the conference takes place in Paris, but it has also met in Mexico City, Beirut, Florence, Montevideo, New Delhi, Nairobi, Belgrade, and Sofia.

Decisions of the General Conference are made by a **simple majority vote, except for certain constitutionally specified matters that require a two-thirds majority, such as amending the UNESCO constitution or adopting an international convention.** Member nations are not automatically bound by conventions adopted by the General Conference, but the UNESCO constitution requires them to submit such conventions to their appropriate national authority for ratification within one year. The same applies to recommendations, which the General Conference is empowered to adopt by simple majority vote.

The Executive Board

The <u>Executive Board</u> ensures the overall management of UNESCO. It prepares the work of the General Conference and sees that its decisions are properly carried out. The functions and responsibilities of the Executive Board are derived primarily from the Constitution and from rules or directives laid down by the General Conference.

Every two years the General Conference assigns specific tasks to the Board. Other functions stem from agreements concluded between UNESCO and the United Nations, the specialized UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations.

The Executive Board's fifty-eight members are elected by the General Conference. The choice of these representatives is largely a matter of the diversity of the cultures they represent, as well as their geographic origin. Skillful negotiations may be needed before a balance is reached among the different regions of the world in a way that will reflect the universality of the Organization. The Executive Board meets twice a year.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat is the Executive Branch of the organisation. It consists of the <u>Director-General</u> and the Staff appointed by him or her. The staff is divided into Professional and General Service categories. About 700 staff members work in UNESCO's 53 field offices around the world.
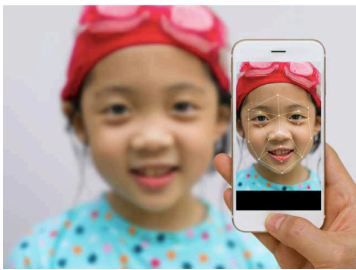
What is the problem?

Imagine an autonomous car with broken brakes going at full speed towards a grand-mother and a child. **By deviating a little, one can be saved.**

It is not a human driver who is going to take the decision, but the car's algorithm.

Who would you choose, the grandmother or the child? Do you think there is only one right answer?

**The problem is that artificial intelligence poses ethical dilemmas.** WATCH:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzYG56HLxbI
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqFqWlqOB1g

READ one or two additional **EXAMPLES** of the ethical dilemmas generated by AI technologies:
https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics/cases

UNESCO is concerned by many of the ethical issues raised by innovations like AI, in particular **discrimination** and **stereotyping**, including the issue of **gender inequality,** but also the **fight against disinformation, the right to privacy, the protection of personal data,** and **human and environmental rights.**

What is a stereotype? According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica "in psychology, a stereotype is a fixed, oversimplified, and often biased belief about a group of people. Stereotypes are typically rationally unsupported generalizations, and, once a person becomes accustomed to stereotypical thinking, he or she may not be able to see individuals for who they are. Stereotypes can legitimize hostility against a whole social group. In addition, because stereotypes are ingrained in the culture—people begin learning stereotypes during childhood—they tend to signal which social groups are presumably appropriate targets for relieving individual frustration."

How can artificial intelligence promote stereotypes and discriminatory practices?
CHECK this: https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2023-generative-ai-bias/
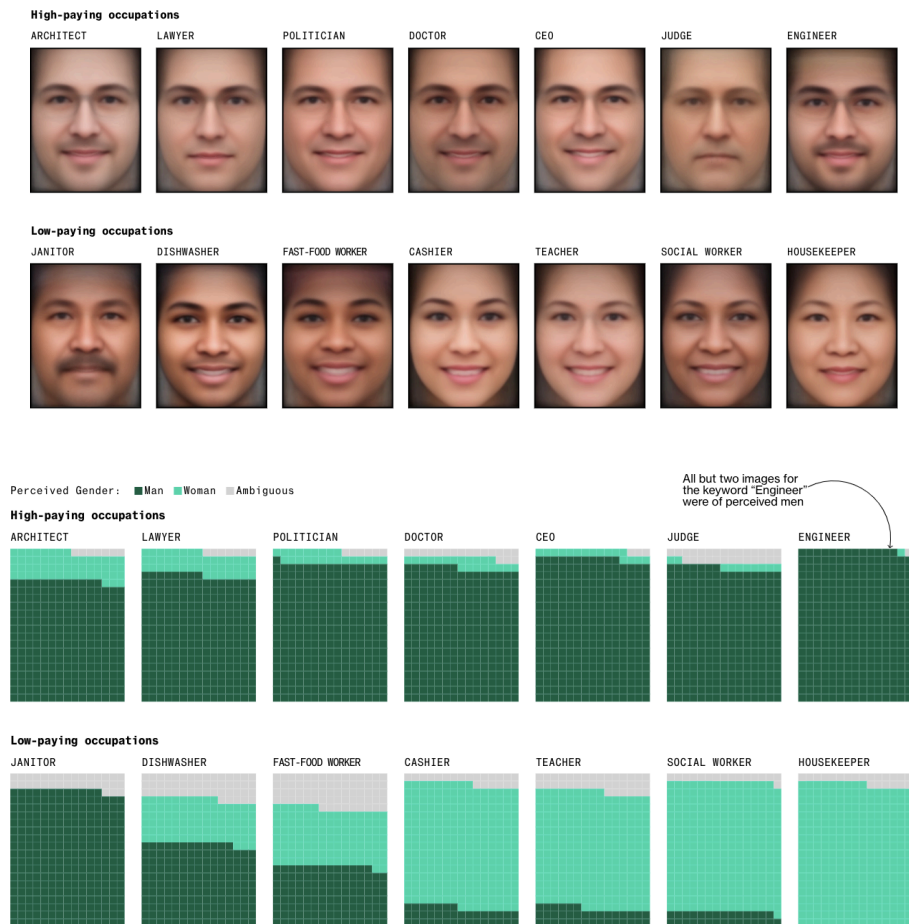
Industry self-regulation is clearly not sufficient to avoid ethical harms, which is why the Recommendation provides the tools to ensure that AI developments abide by the rule of law, avoiding harm, and ensuring that when harm is done, accountability and redressal mechanisms are at hand for those affected. In other words, companies, and private services providers (telecommunication, data analytics, medical, automotive, and cybersecurity providers) in the field of technology should have external and independently set rules to comply with.

UNESCO's Recommendation places a **Readiness Assessment tool** at the core of its guidance to Member States. This tool enables countries to ascertain the competencies and skills required in the workforce to ensure robust regulation of the artificial intelligence sector. It also provides that the States report regularly on their progress and their practices in the field of artificial intelligence, in particular by submitting a periodic report every four years. **CHECK** the tool: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385198

What has been done in UNESCO to address these dilemmas?

UNESCO produced the first-ever global standard on AI ethics – the '**Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence**' in November 2021. This framework was adopted by all 193 Member States. The protection of human rights and dignity is the cornerstone of the Recommendation, based on the advancement of fundamental principles such as transparency and fairness, always remembering the importance of human oversight of AI systems. However, what makes the Recommendation exceptionally applicable are its extensive **Policy Action Areas,** which allow policymakers to translate the core values and principles into action with respect to data governance, environment and ecosystems, gender, education and research, and health and social wellbeing, among many other spheres.

READ the recommendation: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381137

> **In no other field is the ethical compass more relevant than in artificial intelligence.** These general-purpose technologies are re-shaping the way we work, interact, and live. **The world is set to change at a pace not seen since the deployment of the printing press six centuries ago. AI technology brings major benefits in many areas, but without the ethical guardrails, it risks reproducing real world biases and discrimination, fueling divisions, and threatening fundamental human rights and freedoms.**
> (Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO)

What should your committee discuss?

Your country should examine to what extent countries can set standards for an ethical use of innovative technologies. The committee can explore how countries can work together to reach new agreements to effectively implement UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. Member States are encouraged to consider (both individually and collectively) these questions:

GENERAL QUESTIONS
1.1. Does your government currently have plans to implement the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI,1 through establishing a **national AI Ethics Commission** or through other measures?
1.2 Has your government done any prioritization (determine the **priorities)** regarding the **specific sectors** that would benefit from government intervention (such as regulation, strategies, or guidelines, etc.) regarding AI?
1.3 Does your government **inform the public** when they are **subjected to the use of AI** systems that profile or make decisions about them in the provision of public services?
1.4 Which ministry/ies are responsible for AI governance? **Please elaborate on the composition of the teams.**
1.5 Overall, what are the **most important challenges** to developing AI regulations and policies in the country?

CHECK some other relevant aspects to be addressed in https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385198

PAY ATTENTION to the legal, data privacy, online safety, integrity of speech, environmental, diversity, and inclusion considerations as well.

CHECK some of the key terms associated with **DATA PRIVACY, ETHICS,** and **PROTECTION.**
https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG_BigData_final_web.pdf

CHECK the 9 aspects for data privacy, ethics, and protection on big data as part of the 20230 Agenda: https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG_BigData_final_web.pdf

What is gender equality? What is gender equality in education and what are other important definitions?

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of girls and boys, women, and men.[1] Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. **Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.** Gender equality is not a women's issue but concerns all girls and boys, women, and men. Equality between women and men is both a human right and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

CHECK: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380259

Gender parity in education refers to equal numbers and proportions of girls and boys, in enrolment and completion at different levels of education (UNESCO, 2019c). The gender parity index (GPI) measures gender parity, measuring the ratio of girls to boys or women to men. Gender parity in education contributes towards gender equality, which takes much more to achieve (UNESCO, 2019d). **Gender equality in education means that the right to education of all learners is respected equally. All learners are given equal access to learning opportunities, resources and protections, and all learners benefit equally from and are treated equally in education (UNESCO, 2019c).**

Gender equality through education refers to the fact that education has a key role to play in addressing the wider issue of gender equality. Educational institutions can promote new attitudes and patterns of belief, transforming the way people think about traditional **gender roles** and helping to build long-term sustainable change. And achieving equal outcomes for both female and male learners can help to empower people of all genders to create better lives (UNESCO, 2019c).

Gender mainstreaming in education involves systematically integrating a gender equality perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of interventions to ensure that both girls and women, boys and men equally benefit from these interventions and that gender equality is being promoted (UNESCO, 2019d).

What is the problem?

PAY attention to the challenges that **BOYS** face in the educational systems.

The problem is that the right to an education is a fundamental right that needs to be protected. **WATCH** this video to learn how UNESCO promotes the right to education: https://youtu.be/2izn9XSNzww

WATCH to understand part of the problem: https://youtu.be/tF-nS5KKWh4

Gender equality is a global priority at UNESCO. While much progress has been made, large gender gaps still exist in education in many settings, most often at the expense of girls, although in some regions boys are at a disadvantage. Globally, 118.5 million girls and 125.5 million boys are out of school. Women still account for almost two-thirds of all adults unable to read.

"Despite progress, **about 244 million children and youth are out of school** according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics:

118.5 million are girls and

125.5 million are boys.

Women still account for nearly two-thirds of the 771 million adults without basic literacy skills. Poverty, geographical isolation, minority status, disability, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, and traditional attitudes about the status and role of women and men, are among the many obstacles that prevent children and youth from fulfilling their right to participate in, complete and benefit from education."
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000369000

To what extend is your country meeting Sustainable Goal 4, particularly to achieve gender equality through education? What are countries in your region or block doing to achieve it?

TARGET 4·1	TARGET 4·2	TARGET 4·3	TARGET 4·4	TARGET 4·5
FREE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION	EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION	EQUAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION	INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH RELEVANT SKILLS FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS	ELIMINATE ALL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

TARGET 4·6	TARGET 4·7	TARGET 4·A	TARGET 4·B	TARGET 4·C
UNIVERSAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY	EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP	BUILD AND UPGRADE INCLUSIVE AND SAFE SCHOOLS	EXPAND HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Consider the following questions to write resolutions to promote gender equality in education:

- What measures are needed to promote gender equality more effectively? What new targets should be set? Are new agreements needed? **What could a resolution add for the achievement of gender equality in education?**

- What obstacles still need to be eliminated in specific countries and regions?

- What concrete types of programs are needed? What areas (elementary education, global citizenship, higher education (college level), vocational education, virtual education, digital literacy, community mobilization, teaching materials design) should be prioritized? **What are the priorities?**

- What values and attitudes should be promoted to eliminate the barriers that girls specifically find in educational contexts? What values and attitudes should be promoted to eliminate the barriers that boys specifically find in educational spaces? What values and attitudes are needed to address the needs of both?

- What resources are needed (money, human resources, infrastructure (buildings, facilities) and services (transportation, housing, nutrition, health)?

- **What already existing tools can be used, reinforced, or revisited?**

Main obstacles to gender equality in education

Education provision

- Gender bias (textbooks, teaching practices)
- Under-representation of female teachers (secondary and higher education)
- School-related gender-based violence
- Barriers to welcoming pregnant girls and women and young mothers in schools
- Social gender norms

Education demand

- Economic conditions and poverty
- Place of residence
- Early marriage and pregnancy
- Social gender norms

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Remember that UNICEF defines **gender norms** as **ideas about how men and women should behave**: the expectations and standards that are set for each gender in different societies, cultures, and communities. **People internalize these 'rules'** at an early age, in the beginning of a cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping that continues for the rest of their lives. Gender norms thus not only become individuals' expectations of others, but also of themselves. If you need some examples, here they are:

- Girls should perform more caregiving and chores than boys.
- Men should be the main financial providers for the family.
- When exploring career choices, is better for girls to become doctors, teachers, nurses, psychologists, and veterinarians. For boys, it is better to become engineers, to work in information, communication, and technology (ICT) and in mechanics.

- Certain jobs are better for women.

- Certain jobs are better for men.