Quebec Model United Nations

Background Guide

Safety of Journalists
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The Use, Promotion and Regulation of
Artificial Intelligence in Education
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Table of Contents

Committee Overview

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established on November 16, 1945[1], and came into force in 1946, after the twentieth signature of its founding Constitution[2]. As a specialized agency of the United Nations, its mission is "to build peace through international cooperation [by offering] a broad range of expertise in the fields of Education, the Sciences and Culture".[3] UNESCO plays a unique role in strengthening the ties between nations by fostering universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and human rights along with fundamental freedoms enshrined in the United Nations Charter[4]. Its mission is broad, including reducing poverty, sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and the protection of human rights.

UNESCO's mandate is formally defined in article 1 (2) of the *UNESCO Constitution* (1945)[5]. This specialized agency has been granted the right to promote culture, science and education through mass communication campaigns, collaboration with Member States on educational and art conservation programs, knowledge dissemination networks to encourage cooperation, international conventions, and much more, without ever interfering with the Member States' national policies or request specific actions on such matters[6]. It can also issue recommendations, declarations and publications to help promote peace and security through science, culture and education. Being financially and structurally independent from the primary organs of the United Nations, UNESCO works with the United Nations to pursue common interests, including peace and security and social and economic development.

Today, UNESCO boasts a membership of 194 Member States and 12 Associate Members. This esteemed organization is structured around three principal bodies: the General Conference, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat. These entities convene biennially to deliberate on proposals put forth by the Executive Board and presented to the General Conference. Each Member State is entitled to elect up to five delegates to participate in these pivotal meetings.

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[1] ' UNESCO in Brief'. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://www.unesco.org/en/brief. Accessed June 3rd, 2025.
[2] Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (adopted 16 November 1945, entered into force 4 November 1946) 4 UNTS 27. Accessed June 3rd, 2025.
[3] 'What Is Our Mission?' United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://www.unesco.org/en/our-expertise. Accessed June 3rd, 2025.
[4] Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (adopted 16 November 1945, entered into force 4 November 1946) 4 UNTS 275, art 1. https://www.unesco.org/fr/legal-affairs/constitution. Accessed June 3rd, 2025.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Idem, art 1(3).

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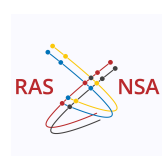Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, adopted 16 November 1945, entered into force 4 November 1946, 4 UNTS 275.

UNESCO in Brief (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) <https://www.unesco.org/en/brief>

What Is Our Mission? (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) <https://www.unesco.org/en/our-expertise>

Safety of Journalists

Introduction

The safety of journalists remains a critical global issue that directly impacts the right to freedom of expression. Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) ensures everyone's right to freedom of expression, including journalists. Yet, this right is under threat; between 2020 and 2021, 117 journalists were killed, and the murder rate of women journalists has nearly doubled, going from 6% to 11%.[7] These alarming statistics underscore the dangers journalists face whilst exercising their right to freedom of expression and reporting on important events. The safety of journalists is also intertwined with broader objectives, as highlighted by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which emphasizes the necessity for public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms.[8]

The international community, through institutions such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Human Rights Council (HRC), has implemented various frameworks and initiatives to address the challenges faced by journalists. A key initiative is the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* (2012), which aims to enhance global legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms surrounding journalist safety.[9] Additionally, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression is a key actor in collecting data on violations against journalists, offering recommendations, and holding Member States accountable for the protection of their citizens and journalists.[10]

The safety of journalists is crucial in combating gender-based violence (GBV) and ensuring the public's right to access information. Indeed, female journalists are particularly vulnerable to online violence, which sometimes leads to self-censorship. Although the international community has recently focused on addressing GBV, more action is needed to establish legal frameworks and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their acts of violence. Moreover, the safety of journalists is closely tied to the public's right to information, as it allows them to freely report on critical issues and educate the public. Threats to their safety restrict access to information, and consequently the public from acquiring information on crucial issues.

Member States must effectively address the issues surrounding journalist safety, particularly in combating GBV and safeguarding the public's right to access information. More must be done to strengthen the legal frameworks that protect journalists and ensure accountability against those persecuting them.

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[7] "2022 Report on the Safety of journalists and the Danger of Impunity". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2022. https://www.unesco.org/reports/safety-journalists/2022/en . Accessed October 11th, 2024.

[8] "Goal 16 Department of Economic and Social Affairs ". United Nations. 2012. https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16. Accessed October 11th, 2024.

[9] "UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2012. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384476. Accessed October 11th, 2024.

[10] "Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression". United Nations Human Rights. https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-freedom-of-opinion-and-expression. Accessed October 11th, 2024.

International and Regional Framework

Freedom of opinion and expression was recognized as a fundamental right in 1948, with article 19 of the UDHR.[11] Its importance was reiterated in SDG 16. Target 16.10, which aims to "ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements", tackles the issue of journalist safety and contains two indicators analyzing the number of verified cases of violence against journalists (16.10.1) and the number of Member States with laws or regulations for public access to information (16.10.2).[12]

However, with more than 70 journalists killed in 2022,[13] reporters' safety is still a pressing issue that triggers the core of international democracy, by putting at risk freedom of expression, of press and of information. The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, called on governments to do their utmost to support freedom of expression, as it is "a cornerstone of democratic societies".[14] HRC Resolution 44/12 (2020) also emphasizes the importance of this right by considering the protection of journalists as a way of preserving other human rights and freedoms.[15] In a mission of protecting journalists worldwide against violence, the HRC also adopted Resolution 33/2 (2016), which tackles the issue of journalist safety.[16] It urges Member States to act against all attacks on journalists, for example, by having an independent process of investigation for such cases and by creating safe and secure conditions for all reporters. This resolution was included in the *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline* (2014),[17] which emphasize the importance and the necessity of journalist safety as a way of protecting freedom of press and expression.[18] Moreover, General Assembly Resolution 68/163 (2013) proclaimed November 2 as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists and defined certain acts of violence happening against reporters.[19] UNESCO also has a monitoring mechanism for the killings of journalists, called UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity, which provides "an analytical report on the killing of journalists, media workers and social media producers engaged in journalistic activities".[20]

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[11] "Universal Declaration of Human Rights". United Nation. 1948. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights. Accessed June 21th, 2024.

[12] Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "Sustainable Development: Goal 16". https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#targets_and_indicators. Accessed June 21th, 2024.

[13] "Intimidated, jailed, abused: Threats against journalists harm us all, warns UN chief" (2022) UN News: Law and Crime Prevention. https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130117. Accessed June 21th, 2024.

[14] "Free press 'a cornerstone' of democratic societies, UN says" (2021) UN News : Human Rights. https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/05/1091132. Accessed June 21th, 2024.

[15] UN HRC Res 44/12 (2020) UN Doc A/RES/44/12

[16] UN HRC Res 33/2 (2016) UN Doc A/RES/33/2

[17] European Union (Council of the European Union) "EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline" (12 May 2014). eu_human_rights_guidelines_on_freedom_of_expression_online_and_offline_en.pdf (europa.eu). Accessed August 22th, 2024.

[18] Ibid.

[19] UNGA Res 68/163 (2013) UN Doc A/RES/68/163

[20] "Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/dg-report-safety-journalists. Accessed August 22th, 2024.

Other worldwide treaties and organizations recognized the urging issue of protecting journalists against torture, enforced disappearances, unjustified detentions, killings and intimidation. Article 19 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) defines the freedom of expression as the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice".[21] The Human Rights Committee's (CCPR) General Comment No. 34 (2011) also tackles the safety of journalists, by describing freedom of expression as "essential for any society".[22] Building upon article 19 of the ICCPR, this General Comment outlines situations where freedom of expression is indispensable, such as when political issues occur, and reiterates the importance of journalist safety as a key approach for protecting this right.[23]

Role of the International System

In 2012, UNESCO endorsed the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*, which aims to "strengthen the legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms designed to ensure the safety of journalists"[24] through the prevention, protection and prosecution of crimes against journalists.[25] The plan of action covers six key areas: raising awareness through events such as World Press Freedom Day, establishing standards and policies, monitoring and reporting through mechanisms like the UNESCO observatory on killed Journalists, capacity building such as training security forces and local actors, research about the safety of journalists and global trend reports, coalition building that ensures collaboration and exchanges between the media, NGOs, academics and governments.[26]

The CCPR monitors State Parties' compliance with the ICCPR, particularly with article 19, ensuring that measures are implemented to protect freedom of expression for all citizens, including journalists. State Parties send detailed reports to the CCPR on how they are implementing political and civil rights and the CCPR emits a list of concerns about the reports, provides recommendations, and considers individual complaints regarding State Parties.[27] Additionally, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, established by the HRC in 1993, plays a key role in

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[21] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171 (ICCPR)

[22] "General comment No.34 on Article 19: Freedoms of opinion and expression". United Nation Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. 2011. https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no34-article-19-freedoms-opinion-and. Accessed June 21th, 2024.

[23] Ibid.

[24] "UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2012. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384476. Accessed June 28th, 2024.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] "What the treaty bodies do." United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/what-treaty-bodies-do. Accessed June 28th, 2024.

enhancing journalist safety.[28] This includes gathering information on violations and receiving reports from various organizations to make recommendations to Member States on addressing the dangers faced by journalists. A 2012 report by the Special Rapporteur highlighted the increasing risks faced by journalists, such as governmental censorship and digital harassment, and called for more robust protection of freedom of expression by Member States.[29] Additionally, in 2023, the Special Rapporteur linked freedom of expression to sustainable development, emphasizing its importance in ensuring access to information and involving all communities, indigenous, youth and civil society actors, in achieving SDGs.[30]

Other international organizations also recognize the importance of ensuring the safety of journalists. The African Union has a Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, whose main task is to evaluate the laws of Member States and make recommendations "encouraging the States to better align their policies with their obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights".[31] Other tasks include guiding efforts to protect freedom of expression, "analysing domestic laws for compliance with international standards", and making recommendations and conducting visits to African Union Member States.[32] Furthermore, the European Union (EU) has implemented many mechanisms to preserve press freedom and journalist safety. One key initiative is the *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline* (2014), which outlines procedures to prevent infringements on freedom of opinion and provides mechanisms for addressing such violations when they occur in Member States.[33] The EU additionally implemented the *Recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists* (2021), which introduces concrete actions aimed at implementing safer working conditions for journalists, especially female ones, online and offline.[34]

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[28] "About the mandate; SpecialRapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression ." United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-freedom-of-opinion-and-expression/about-mandate . Accessed June 28th, 2024.

[29] "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Frank La Rue". United Nation High Commissioner on Refugees. 4 June 2012. https://www.refworld.org/reference/themreport/unhrc/2012/en/87407

[30] "Sustainable development and freedom of expression : why voice matters : report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Irene Khan". Human Rights Council. 2023. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4011273?ln=fr&v=pdf#files

[31] "SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION". International Justice Resource Center. https://ijrcenter.org/regional/african/special-rapporteur-on-freedom-of-expression-and-access-to-information/ . Accessed June 28th, 2024.

[32] Ibid.

[33] European Union (Council of the European Union) "EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline" (12 May 2014). eu_human_rights_guidelines_on_freedom_of_expression_online_and_offline_en.pdf (europa.eu). Accessed August 22th, 2024.

[34] "Recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists". European Commission. 2021. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/recommendation-protection-safety-and-empowerment-journalists. Accessed June 28th, 2024.

Combating Gender-based Violence

GBV is a growing concern in the field of journalism. GBV is defined as "violence directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately."[35] This violence can result in various forms of harm, such as physical, sexual, psychological or economic, often occurring simultaneously.[36] In journalism, GBV is particularly alarming as it targets and silences female journalists, which results in preventing them from reporting and exposing critical issues. Women are especially vulnerable to GBV due to the rise in both offline and online attacks, including digital harassment on social media.[37]

UNESCO's mandate to promote freedom of expression and ensure the safety of journalists extends to combatting all forms of violence against women in the media. In line with its duty, UNESCO has taken many significant steps to address this issue. One prominent initiative is the 2019 report, *The Chilling: A global study of online violence against women journalists,* produced in collaboration with the International Center for Journalists. This report highlights global trends in online violence against female journalists and offers solutions to combat the issue.[38] Key findings include that nearly 3/4 of female journalists surveyed have experienced online violence in their work, 1/5 have been attacked or abused offline in incidents stemming from online threats, mental health impacts are the most commonly reported consequences of GBV, and 1/3 of respondents admitted to self-censorship as a direct result of online violence.[39] The report also underscores the role of intersectionality, as female journalists from marginalized groups, such as LGBTQ+ individuals, women of color, and those with disabilities, face even higher levels of online violence.[40]

One key approach to combating GBV is the implementation and strengthening of legal frameworks. Several United Nations resolutions have been passed to condemn GBV and urge Member States to "tackle these issues as part of broader efforts to promote and protect the human rights of women, eliminate gender inequality and tackle gender-based stereotypes in society."[41] Notable resolutions include General Assembly Resolution 72/175 (2018) and Resolution 74/157 (2020).[42]Additionally, a 2020 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls recommended "prohibiting and criminalising gender-based online violence against women journalists, creating investigative units or independent commissions to investigate these issues, as well as developing training protocols for law

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[35] "What is gender-based violence ?" European Union.
https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en#:~:text=gender%2Dbased%20violence-,Gender%2Dbased%20violence%20(GBV)%20by%20definition,of%20a%20particular%20gender%20disproportionately.
[36] Ibid.
[37] UNESCO, "The Chilling: A global study of online violence against women journalists".(2019). https://www.icfj.org/our-work/chilling-global-study-online-violence-against-women-journalists
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid, p.11
[40] Ibid, p.241
[41] UNESCO, 'Legal and normative frameworks for combatting online violence against women journalists", (2022), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383789, p.5.
[42] A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1 (2017), A/RES/74/157 (2019).

enforcement to better prosecute cases."[43] Furthermore, the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* (2012) has supported governments in enacting and implementing legal frameworks to ensure the rights to freedom of expression and information.[44]

Ensuring accountability for crimes against female journalists is another vital component in combating GBV. Nine times out of ten, crimes committed against journalists, whether online or offline, go unpunished, highlighting the urgent need to address impunity.[45] In 2012, the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, declared that "[w]hen the State fails to hold perpetrators accountable, impunity not only intensifies the subordination and powerlessness of the targets of violence, but also sends a message to society that male violence against women is both acceptable and inevitable".[46] Therefore, one way to ensure a safe environment for journalists is coalition-building among various actors. Member States, internet communication companies, and NGOs must work together to "exchange information, encourage dialogue between the different stakeholders and complementarity between their actions."[47] The importance of the role played by communication companies was highlighted by the fact that "misinformation, misogyny, conspiracy communities and political populism and extremism" are all ways that exacerbate GBV.[48] These elements increase both offline and online violence against female journalists and must be addressed by social media companies to curb the spread of GBV and ensure that only factual information is spread on social media.

Another crucial aspect in combating GBV is recognizing its impacts on mental health, and providing support for women journalists affected, as many suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.[49] There are significant gaps that have been identified in the support provided by organizations, particularly in terms of access to psychological services for impacted journalists.[50] Efforts must include offering therapy, training on how to handle online violence, and legal pathways to ensure accountability against the perpetrators. Member States and media organizations not only have the duty to protect women journalists from violence but also to provide support to those who are targeted. This support is vital in the fight against GBV, ensuring the full recovery of female journalists and avoiding long-term mental health issues.

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[43] UNESCO, 'Legal and normative frameworks for combatting online violence against women journalists", (2022), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383789, p.6.
[44] UNESCO, " The UN Plan of Action on the safety of journalists and the Issue of Impunity", (2012). https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384476
[45] Ibid.
[46] OHCHR, " Impunity for violence against women is a global concern", (2012). https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2012/08/impunity-violence-against-women-global-concern
[47] UNESCO, " The UN Plan of Action on the safety of journalists and the Issue of Impunity", (2012). https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/un-plan-action
[48] UNESCO, "The Chilling: A global study of online violence against women journalists".(2019), p.172. https://www.icfj.org/our-work/chilling-global-study-online-violence-against-women-journalists
[49] Ibid,p.12
[50] Ibid, p.135.

The Impacts of Journalists' Safety on Access to Information

Freedom of expression, a fundamental right recognized in article 19 of the UDHR,[51] is the right to speak freely, to agree or disagree with people in power, to share information and to express every opinion and demand.[52] According to the current United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, it is also a key element to fulfilling the worldwide goal of "letting no one behind".[53] Her 2023 report explains that it is "only when both access to information and the effective participation of youth, Indigenous communities, the media, human rights defenders, civil society actors and others are fulfilled" that we will be able to achieve this promise.[54] By covering every major event, journalists provide reliable and safe information to citizens around the world.[55] This crucial information is essential to achieve "durable peace, sustainable development and human rights".[56] Journalists are able to warn at-risk populations of incoming natural disasters, communicate economic predictions linked to precarious situations and give rightful information in a political campaign. With more than 880 journalists killed in the last 10 years,[57] their jobs are at risk every day, and so is their freedom of expression.

Not only does violence against journalists pose a threat to freedom of expression, but it also hinders their ability to perform their work, thus impacting the right to information.[58] Such violence takes many forms; only in 2020, 54 journalists were held hostages and more than 280 cases of imprisoned journalists were recorded by the Committee to Protect Journalists.[59] Beyond the harmful effects on their physical and psychological health, those attacks undermine and restrain journalists from collecting and sharing information. It also creates a climate of fear, as journalists have to live and work under the threat of illegal arrests, intimidation or any other form of violence. For some, it also pushes them to self-censorship; a UNESCO report titled "*Press and Planet in Danger*" showed that environmental and climate change reporters tended to censor themselves out of fear of repression, with 749 of them

[51] "Freedom of Expression and Opinion". United Nation Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/freedom-expression-and-opinion. Accessed August 21th, 2024.
[52] "Freedom of Expression". Amnesty International. https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/freedom-of-expression/. Accessed August 21th, 2024.
[53] UN HRC "Sustainable development and freedom of expression: why voice matter - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression" (2023) A/HRC/53/25 https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5325-sustainable-development-and-freedom-expression-why-voice. Accessed August 21th, 2024.
[54] Ibid.
[55] "Supporting freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2021. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/supporting-freedom-expression-access-information-and-safety-journalists. Accessed August 21th 2024.
[56] "Journalists covering conflict, essential workers for a 'durable peace' says Guterres". UN News: Global Perspective Human Stories. https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1077432#:~:text=The%20UN%20chief%E2%80%99s%20stated%20that%20%E2%80%9Cthe%20fundamental%20role,be%20respected%20and%20protected%20under%20international%20humanitarian%20law.%E2%80%9D. Accessed August 21th, 2024.
[57] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (n 23).
[58] UNESCO, "World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Global Report 2021-2022" (2022) p. 92.
[59] Ibid, p.93

having been attacked in the last 15 years.[60] Other topics are more at risk of leading to attacks, such as stories about corruption, human rights violations, human trafficking and political transgressions.[61]

With the rise of internet usage and the development of technology, an increase in online violence against journalists has been observed. Whether it is online harassment, surveillance, data storage or digital attacks, these actions threaten the safety and integrity of journalists and their sources.[62] Those attacks are mostly used to steal confidential information to then intimidate and harass journalists, creating once again a sense of fear that obstructs freedom of expression.[63] During the 2020 World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO highlighted the important role of journalism in the context of worldwide crisis, such as COVID-19, and the rise of online violence during a period when virtual work was at its peak.[64] They reminded the world that fighting online violence helps counter misinformation, a fundamental part of freedom of expression.[65] Attacks on female journalists, including online violence, are more frequent. They face abuse through hateful language, harassment, and threats to their reputation, physical and sexual safety, and professional standing.[66]

The high impunity rate for crimes against journalists is another issue restraining freedom of expression. As of 2020, more than 87% of crimes against journalists were still not resolved,[67] and despite the number of killings decreasing in the last few years, the global impunity rate remains high.[68] As UNESCO highlighted, judicialization, such as law enforcement and prosecution, is one of the key elements in protecting journalists from violence and preserving freedom of expression.[69] Without consequences for those attacks, violence against journalists will continue to occur, and the climate of fear will remain. Multiple programs and interventions are put in place to end impunity for crimes against journalists, many of them within the framework of the *UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*, with the goal of reinforcing the "three Ps": Prevention, Protection and Prosecution.[70]

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[60] "Press and Planet in Danger". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2024. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389501. Accessed August 22th 2024.

[61] "Vast majority of crimes against journalists yet to be resolved: UNESCO". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2020. https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1076652. Accessed August 22th, 2024.

[62] UNESCO (n 24). p.96.

[63] Ibid.

[64] "World Press Freedom Day 2020". United Nations. 2020. https://www.un.org/en/civil-society/world-press-freedom-day-2020. Accessed August 22th 2024.

[65] Ibid.

[66] UNESCO, "Online violence against women journalists: a global snapshot of incidence and impacts" (2020) CI/FEJ/2020/PI/1, p.6.

[67] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (n 29).

[68] UNESCO (n 26) p. 89.

[69] "Judiciary is key to end impunity for crimes against journalists, says UNESCO". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2021. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/judiciary-key-end-impunity-crimes-against-journalists-says-unesco. Accessed August 21th, 2024.

[70] "Freedom of Expression and the Rule of Law". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://www.unesco.org/en/freedom-expression-rule-law?hub=687. Accessed August 22th, 2024.

Conclusion and Further Research

With the rise of online violence and the low rate of impunity, journalist safety is a worldwide pressing issue. Journalist violence not only violates liberty of expression, it also pushes reporters to self-censor and creates a climate of fear in the world of information sharing. As those attacks happen more often to women journalists, they also brim the right to have access to truthful and up-to-date information. The international community should and must find a way of stopping this violence.

Many topics and questions are up to be discussed and solved by Member States, such as: Should the *UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* be strengthened? Should awareness and advocacy be increased to safeguard freedom of expression? Could more partnerships between regional and national networks be created to protect and promote this right? Should the development of monitoring and reporting systems designed to track crimes against journalists be promoted? How can judiciary and security forces be built and developed to support their role in protecting freedom of expression?[71]

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[71] "Supporting freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists". United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2021. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/supporting-freedom-expression-access-information-and-safety-journalists. Accessed October 10th, 2024.
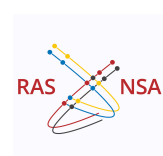
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‒ ‒ *Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) <https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/dg-report-safety-journalists>

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<eu_human_rights_guidelines_on_freedom_of_expression_online_and_offline_en.pdf (europa.eu)>

‒ ‒ *Freedom of Expression* (Amnesty International) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/freedom-of-expression/>

‒ ‒ *Freedom of Expression and Opinion* (United Nation Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/freedom-expression-and-opinion>

‒ ‒ *Freedom of Expression and the Rule of Law* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) <https://www.unesco.org/en/freedom-expression-rule-law?hub=687>

‒ ‒ *Free press 'a cornerstone' of democratic societies, UN says* (UN News : Human Rights 2021) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/05/1091132>

‒ ‒ *General comment No.34 on Article 19: Freedoms of opinion and expression* (United Nation Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2011) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no34-article-19-freedoms-opinion-and>

‒ ‒ *Goal 16 Department of Economic and Social Affairs* (United Nations 2012) <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

‒ ‒ *Impunity for violence against women is a global concern* (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2012) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2012/08/impunity-violence-against-women-global-concern >

‒ ‒ *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171

‒ ‒ *Intimidated, jailed, abused: Threats against journalists harm us all, warns UN chief* (UN News: Law and Crime Prevention 2022) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130117>

– – *Journalists covering conflict, essential workers for a 'durable peace' says Guterres* (UN News: Global Perspective Human Stories) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1077432#:~:text=The%20UN%20chief%E2%80%99s%20stated%20that%20%E2%80%9Cthe%20fundamental%20role,be%20respected%20and%20protected%20under%20international%20humanitarian%20law.%E2%80%9D>

– – *Judiciary is key to end impunity for crimes against journalists, says UNESCO* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2021) <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/judiciary-key-end-impunity-crimes-against-journalists-says-unesco>

– – *Legal and normative frameworks for combatting online violence against women journalists* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2022) < https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383789>

– – *Online violence against women journalists: a global snapshot of incidence and impacts* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2020) CI/FEJ/2020/PI/1

– – *Press and Planet in Danger* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2024) <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389501>

– – *Recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists* (European Commission 2021) <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/recommendation-protection-safety-and-empowerment-journalists>

– – *SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION* (International Justice Resource Center) <https://ijrcenter.org/regional/african/special-rapporteur-on-freedom-of-expression-and-access-to-information/>

– – *Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression* (United Nations Human Rights) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-freedom-of-opinion-and-expression.>

– – *Sustainable Development and Freedom of Expression: Why Voice Matters - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression* (UN Human Rights Council 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/53/25 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5325-sustainable-development-and-freedom-expression-why-voice>

– – *Supporting freedom of expression, access to information and the safety of journalists* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2021) <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/supporting-freedom-expression-access-information-and-safety-journalists>

– – *Sustainable Development: Goal 16* (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#targets_and_indicators>

– – *The Chilling: A global study of online violence against women journalists* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2019)

<https://www.icfj.org/our-work/chilling-global-study-online-violence-against-women-journalists>

– – *The UN Plan of Action on the safety of journalists and the Issue of Impunity* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2012). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384476>

– – *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nation 1948) <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

UN General Assembly, Draft Resolution A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1 (2017)

UN General Assembly Resolution 68/163 (2013) UN Doc A/RES/68/163

UN General Assembly Resolution 74/157 (2019) UN Doc A/RES/74/157

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 33/2 (2016) UN Doc A/RES/33/2

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 44/12 (2020) UN Doc A/RES/44/12

– – *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2012) <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384476>

– – *Vast majority of crimes against journalists yet to be resolved: UNESCO* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2020) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1076652>

– – *What is gender-based violence ?* (European Union) <https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en#:~:text=gender%2Dbased%20violence-,Gender%2Dbased%20violence%20(GBV)%20by%20definition,of%20a%20particular%20gender%20disproportionately>

– – *What the treaty bodies do* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/what-treaty-bodies-do>

– – *World Press Freedom Day 2020* (United Nations 2020) <https://www.un.org/en/civil-society/world-press-freedom-day-2020>

– – *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Global Report 2021-2022* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2022)

The Use, Promotion and Regulation of Artificial Intelligence in Education

Introduction

The mid-twentieth century marked the beginning of a technological revolution, with digital technologies advancing at a remarkable pace that continues to redefine the boundaries of possibility.[72] The concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI) was first introduced in 1956 during the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence.[73] Considered a "thinking machine", it aimed to find ways to make machines use language and concepts to solve problems of all kinds.[74] AI has now evolved into a transformative technology aimed at creating systems capable of performing tasks associated with human intelligence.[75] Although still an emerging topic at the United Nations, principles for large-scale Internet use are beginning to take shape. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has developed the R.O.A.M-X principles which indicate the values with which Member States, stakeholders and individuals shall use the Internet and address the use of AI as "social economic and cultural rights".[76] However, the inclusion of technology across the globe remains a pressing issue: as of 2021, 2.9 billion people had never accessed the Internet.[77]

Education is enshrined as a fundamental human right by the United Nations,[78] a principle reaffirmed by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".[79] Since 2019, UNESCO Member States have been diligently working towards the accomplishment of said goal.[80] However, the COVID-19 pandemic put this progress at risk: 90% of children were forced to pause their studies, which exacerbated disparities both between and within Member States and disproportionately impacted women.[81] Moreover, 57 million children remain out of school.[82] Therefore, by 2030, if no additional measures are implemented, only one-sixth of Member States are projected to achieve this goal based on their national targets.[83]

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[72] United Nations, 'The Impact of Digital Technologies' (*United Nations*) https://www.un.org/en/un75/impact-digital-technologies.
[73] Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, 'The Birth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Research' (*Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory*) https://st.llnl.gov/news/look-back/birth-artificial-intelligence-ai-research#.
[74] John McCarthy and others, 'The Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence. Artificial Intelligence: Past, Present, and Future' 17 https://home.dartmouth.edu/about/artificial-intelligence-ai-coined-dartmouth.
[75] World Intellectual Property Organization, 'Artificial Intelligence and Intellectual Property' (*WIPO*) https://www.wipo.int/about-ip/en/frontier_technologies/ai_and_ip.html.
[76] UNESCO, 'Internet Universality Indicators' (*UNESCO*) https://www.unesco.org/en/internet-universality-indicators.
[77] United Nations, 'ITU: 2.9 Billion People Still Offline' (*United Nations*, 7 December 2021) https://www.un.org/en/delegate/itu-29-billion-people-still-offline.
[78] *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (adopted 10 December 1948, UNGA Res 217 A(III)).
[79] United Nations, 'Goal 4' (*UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs*) https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4.
[80] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition' (United Nations 2023) https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789210024914.
[81] United Nations, 'About the 2022 UN Transforming Education Summit' (*United Nations*) https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit/about.
[82] Ibid.
[83] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition' (United Nations 2023) https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023.

International and Regional Framework

Education is one of UNESCO's pillars, as article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) states that "[e]veryone has the right to education",[84] making it a fundamental right. The adoption of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* reinforced the importance of the right to education through article 13.[85] In 2021, UNESCO advanced this commitment with the *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*,[86] which not only highlights the positive aspects of AI; but also warns Member States of the growing inequalities it might exacerbate.[87] Policy Area 8 of the Recommendation, which focuses on education and research, further recommends the implementation of requirements of competencies and the acquisition of a strong foundation of knowledge for AI adoption. Through the Recommendation, Member States have expressed their desire to create a universal framework consistent with international law, advancing equitable access to these resources. Integrity and trust in generative AI systems are essential to its progress. Given AI's multidisciplinary nature, stakeholders bear the responsibility of ensuring a global and intercultural dialogue. To this end, UNESCO has called upon governments to develop regulations regarding the use of generative AI in schools.[88]

Following the *International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education*, more than 100 Member States suggested the implementation of concrete actions to the Director-General of UNESCO. One such suggestion was that UNESCO should play a leading role within the United Nations regarding the effective and equitable use of AI in education.[89] The *Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence and Education* sets the first suggestion on that matter.[90] In its 2023 report, the International Telecommunication Union outlined the United Nations' AI-related activities, including UNESCO's educational initiatives.[91] Among others, UNESCO published its first guideline to support the development of national policies on the matter: *AI and education: Guidance for policy-makers*.[92] UNESCO has also implemented the project *AI and the Futures of Learning project (based on the Teaching Artificial Intelligence at School project)*,[93] which aims to draw a picture of the current use of AI in schools through surveys on government-approved AI curriculums and the assessment of Member States regulation on ethics of AI in education. On March 11th, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly

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[84] *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (adopted 10 December 1948, UNGA Res 217 A(III)).
[85] ECOSOC E/C.12/1999/10 (1999).
[86] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 'Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence' https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380455/PDF/380455eng.pdf.multi.
[87] Ibid.
[88] UNESCO, 'UNESCO: Governments Must Quickly Regulate Generative AI in Schools' (*UNESCO*, 7 September 2023)
https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-governments-must-quickly-regulate-generative-ai-schools.
[89] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 'Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence and Education' (UNESCO 2019) Programme and meeting document
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368303/PDF/368303qaa.pdf.multi.
[90] Ibid.
[91] International Telecommunication Union, 'United Nations Activities on Artificial Intelligence (AI)' (*ITU* 2023) https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/opb/gen/S-GEN-UNACT-2023-PDF-E.pdf.
[92] Fengchun Miao, Wayne Holmes, and UNESCO, *Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research* (UNESCO 2023) https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386693?locale=en.
[93] Ibid.

adopted its first resolution to promote safe and trustworthy AI systems that are beneficial to the accomplishment of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.[94]

At the regional level, organizations have also addressed the development of AI and its use within the world's education systems. The European Union has established the *Ethical Guidelines on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data in Teaching and Learning for Educators* which is part of the *Digital Education Action Plan*[95] to support its use in schools.[96] Meanwhile, the African Union published the *Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy: Harnessing AI for Africa's Development and Prosperity* which aimed to develop AI within its Members' borders, but also through a cooperative dynamic by encouraging partnerships between Africa and the rest of the world.[97]

Role of the International System

UNESCO, the sole United Nations agency mandated to address all aspects of education, is entrusted to lead the Global Education 2030 Agenda through SDG 4. In doing so, UNESCO draws on the *Convention against Discrimination in Education*, its first standard-setting instrument dedicated to the right to education, recognized under international law.[98] By addressing global challenges and strengthening education systems, UNESCO prioritizes gender equality, literacy, teacher support, and universal access to education. Yet, despite the UDHR's recognition of education as a fundamental right, nearly 244 million children remain out of school due to social, economic and cultural barriers, with 70% of Member States allocating less than 4% of their GDP to education.[99]

UNESCO's involvement in AI in education is both multi-faceted and critical for shaping the future of learning. AI holds the potential to tackle key challenges in education and drive innovation in teaching and learning. Nevertheless, such rapid technological development brings countless risks and challenges. One key initiative is the "Artificial Intelligence in Education" global partnership, launched by UNESCO to foster international collaboration in utilizing AI technologies in education. It seeks to provide Member States with practical guidelines for AI integration, ensuring it aligns with global equity standards.[100] Moreover, the "Gateways" initiative, jointly operated with UNICEF, helps Member States establish and enhance public digital learning platforms. It also promotes cross-border cooperation to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality, well-organized and curriculum-aligned digital

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[94] UNGA A/RES/78/265 (2024) UN Doc A/RES/A/78/L.49.

[95] European Commission, 'Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)' (*European Education Area*, 30 September 2020) https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan.

[96] European Union's Press Release, 'The Commission Publishes Guidelines to Help Teachers Address Misconceptions about Artificial Intelligence and Promote its Ethical Use' (2022). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_6338.

[97] African Union, 'Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy: Harnessing AI for Africa's Development and Prosperity'. (2024). https://au.int/en/documents/20240809/continental-artificial-intelligence-strategy.

[98] Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960 (CPG61/VI11y/AFSR) 15.

[99] Ibid.

[100] UNESCO, 'Artificial Intelligence in Education' (*UNESCO*) https://www.unesco.org/en/digital-education/artificial-intelligence.
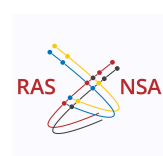
education content.[101] Additionally, UNESCO is able to assess the impact of AI on education through its Institute for Statistics, enabling a holistic approach that asses data-driven evaluations of AI's effectiveness.[102]

Several other United Nations agencies and international organizations complement UNESCO's efforts in addressing the intersection of AI and education. For example, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has established *AI Principles*, offering guidance on ethical and practical applications of AI in education.[103] Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) promotes AI-based educational platforms to address inequality.[104] These collaborative efforts reflect a broader international system, where UNESCO plays a leading but not solitary role in guiding the use of AI for educational purposes. As a result, UNESCO is dedicated to supporting Member States in utilizing AI's potential to achieve the Global Education 2030 Agenda while ensuring that its use is guided by the core principles of inclusion and equity.

UNESCO promotes a human-centred approach to AI,[105] focusing on how to address existing inequalities in access to knowledge, research, and cultural diversity while ensuring that AI does not intensify technological divides within and between Member States. Thus, the concept of "AI for all" must guarantee that everyone benefits from the ongoing technological reform, especially in the form of innovation and knowledge access.[106] By partnering with international organizations and adhering to the core values of its mandate, UNESCO reinforces its leadership role in shaping policies and setting global standards for AI in education. Furthermore, its research and foresight initiatives help Member States navigate the evolving landscape of AI in education, ensuring that technology enhances human capabilities and promotes sustainable development.[107]

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[101] UNESCO, 'Learning Platforms Gateway' (*UNESCO*) https://www.unesco.org/en/digital-education/learning-platforms-gateway?hub=81942.

[102] Steven Duggan, 'AI in Education: Change at the Speed of Learning' [2020] UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education 36 https://iite.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Steven_Duggan_AI-in-Education_2020-2.pdf

[103] OECD, *Artificial Intelligence and Education and Skills* (OECD) https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/artificial-intelligence-and-education-and-skills.html

[104] United Nations Development Programme, *UNDP Digital Strategy 2019-2021* (UNDP 2019) https://digitalstrategy.undp.org/documents/UNDP-digital-strategy-2019.pdf accessed 5 October 2024.

[105] UNESCO, 'Artificial Intelligence in Education' (*UNESCO*, 2024) https://www.unesco.org/en/digital-education/artificial-intelligence accessed 20 June 2024.

[106] Ibid.

[107] UNESCO, 'Digital Learning Futures' (*UNESCO*, 2024) https://www.unesco.org/en/futures-education/digital-learning-futures?hub=81942, accessed June 20th, 2024.

Using Artificial Intelligence to Improve Access to Education

Due to its general purpose and cross-border nature, the use of AI in education is diverse.[108] By using AI in educational systems, teachers and students could benefit from the personalized and high-quality learning methods that these artificial intelligence platforms provide.[109] For instance, Intelligent Tutoring Systems, researched for more than 40 years, remain one of the most common uses of AI in education. However, such systems are not without limitations. The risk with such "personalized learning" is that it could lead to a single pathway to prescribed content instead of providing information that, while personalized, also takes into account the learner's broader goals. In addition, this learning method may also affect the level of human contact between students, something that goes against the principles of the United Nations, which encourages the implementation of human-centred AI systems.[110] AI's potential extends beyond generative tools; innovations like virtual reality offer immersive educational experiences and allow students to explore different environments directly from the classroom. This approach is all the more beneficial since it allows a sensory experience through the use of sounds and images.[111]

In addition, AI has the potential to address the global teacher shortage, a critical obstacle to achieving SDG 4. UNESCO estimates a shortage of 44 million teachers worldwide if Member States wish to achieve SDG 4 by 2030.[112] This shortage of staff is acute in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 15 million additional teachers are needed to provide universal access to education for young people.[113] The integration of AI as educational support appears to also be beneficial for the current workforce by ensuring that teaching becomes a "future-ready" profession.[114] AI's role in addressing this issue is exemplified in the United Kingdom, where the adoption of generative AI by 42% of primary and secondary teachers resulted in a 17% increase in usage between April and November 2023.[115] However, while AI integration proves beneficial, it must complement — not replace — the relationships between teachers and students.

Concrete initiatives further highlight the risk of AI in education systems. In an article published by the UNDP, the Head of Experimentation at the UNDP Cameroon Accelerator Lab presented DASTUDY, a Cameroonian AI platform, where learners can acquire new skills

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[108] High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence and United Nations, 'Governing AI for Humanity' (United Nations 2024) https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/governing_ai_for_humanity_final_report_en.pdf.
[109] Fengchun Miao and others, *AI and Education: Guidance for Policy-Makers* (UNESCO 2021) https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000376709?locale=en.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] David Edwards, 'The United Nations Stands with Teachers and Calls for Action to Strengthen the Profession' (*UNESCO*, 5 April 2024) https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en//en/articles/united-nations-stands-teachers-and-calls-action-strengthen-profession.
[113] World Economic Forum, 'Shaping the Future of Learning: The Role of AI in Education 4.0' (World Economic Forum 2024) Insight Report https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Shaping_the_Future_of_Learning_2024.pdf.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

and share content.[116] This platform aims to share knowledge between students and professionals in the academic, professional and cultural sectors, demonstrating the various benefits of AI in education. However, significant disparities persist. Member States should note that without proper regulation, AI's rapid development risks exacerbating social inequalities and discrimination.[117] Member States are encouraged to engage in discussions aimed at mitigating risks such as gender disparities and inequalities, both regionally and internationally, in accessing all levels of education, in alignment with Target 4.5 of SDG 4.[118] Another challenge faced is algorithmic biases. Member States must pay attention to ensure data protection and promote diverse points of view when analyzing educational data.[119] Moreover, low levels of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills hinder said progress.[120] As noted in the 2023 *Sustainable Development Goal Report - Special Edition*, limited ICT skills remain a significant barrier to achieving universal and meaningful connectivity — further emphasizing the need for SDG 4 and SDG 9 alignment.[121] To achieve SDG 4, integrating AI in education must prioritize sustainability and lifelong learning while ensuring inclusivity at all levels.[122] Regulatory frameworks for emerging technologies must account for Member States' varying levels of access to ICT infrastructure and digital literacy for all.[123] By addressing these disparities, AI can empower individuals to benefit fully from its capacities while safeguarding against potential risks, transforming global education systems for the better for both teachers and learners.[124] This emerging technology should not, however, replace their role or the relationships between teachers and students. Teachers shall be creators and users of technology.[125]

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[116] Serges-Roberteau Tchoffo, 'How Can Generative AI Contribute to Improving Quality Education and Research to Impact the Development of Cameroon?' (*UNDP*, 23 October 2023) https://www.undp.org/cameroon/blog/how-can-generative-ai-contribute-improving-quality-education-and-research-impact-development-cameroon.

[117] ECOSOC E/C.12/GC/2 (April 30, 2020).

[118] Ibid.

[119] Fengchun Miao and others, *AI and Education: Guidance for Policy-Makers* (UNESCO 2021) https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000376709?locale=en.

[120] Ibid.

[121] UNESCO, 'Use of AI in Education: Deciding on the Future We Want' (*UNESCO*, 16 May 2024) https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/use-ai-education-deciding-future-we-want.

[122] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition' (United Nations 2023) https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf.

[123] Ibid.

[124] United Nations Press Release, 'Sustained, Structured Conversation around Risks, Challenges, Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence Vital, Secretary-General Tells Safety Summit' (United Nations Press Office 2023) SG/SM/22017 https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm22017.doc.htm.

[125] International Labour Organization, United Nations, and UNESCO, 'United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession: Transforming the Teaching Profession: Recommendations and Summary of Deliberations' (ILO 2024) https://researchrepository.ilo.org/esploro/outputs/995378693102676.

Intellectual Property Challenges Arising from the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education

The rapid adoption of AI in educational settings has created new possibilities for enhancing learning experiences, creating educational content, and personalizing student engagement. However, this technological advancement also presents significant Intellectual Property (IP) challenges, particularly in the creation, distribution, and protection of educational materials. IP refers to the legal rights arising from intellectual activities across different fields such as the industrial, scientific, literary, and artistic fields.[126] IP rights — protected through various laws, such as copyrights, patents, trademarks, and trade secrets — grant creators exclusive control over their work, enabling them to enjoy the full benefits of their innovations.[127] In the context of education, especially with the use of AI, the definition of IP extends to include innovations, educational content, research, and the processes by which these resources are generated and utilized. These protections are crucial for fostering innovations and ensuring fair recognition of contributions by individuals and institutions alike. However, AI systems often rely on vast amounts of data, much of which are protected by IP rights,[128] raising questions about the ownership of AI-generated outputs. For example, when AI creates educational materials or artistic works based on existing IP-protected content, it creates a risk of infringing on IP rights by either closely replicating protected content or creating derivative works without proper authorization.[129]

The intersection of IP challenges and education becomes even more intricate when addressing Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), which includes traditions, practices, and knowledge passed down through generations, often safeguarded under IP laws.[130] However, these protections are typically designed for tangible creations: physical or concrete works such as books, inventions or branded products. In educational contexts, the use of AI to replicate or disseminate ICH raises significant concerns. If educational institutions utilize AI without properly recognizing or compensating the communities that own this cultural knowledge, it can undermine those communities' rights and identities. This is crucial for ensuring that cultural expressions are accurately represented and that the rightful custodians are acknowledged in educational materials. The 1973 origins of IP Rights were intended to protect creators and innovators.[131] Yet, as AI increasingly contributes to the creation of new content, there is a growing need to reassess how these rights are applied. IP protection offers several benefits, such as controlling access to and use of knowledge, which is particularly relevant in educational contexts where the sharing of knowledge is preeminent. However, the challenges of administering these rights, managing royalties, and ensuring equitable access to AI-generated content remain significant.[132]

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[126] UNESCO, *Hand-out 7: Introduction to Intellectual Property and Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2024) https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/U055-v1.0-HO7-EN_Introduction_to_intellectual_propery_and_ICH.docx.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] UNESCO, *Information Sheet: Intellectual Property* (2024) https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Intellectual_property_EN.pdf.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.

UNESCO has recognized the need for global guidance on the ethical use of AI, particularly in education and research. The *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* emphasizes the importance of ensuring that AI is used in ways that promote equity and inclusivity, without exacerbating existing inequalities.[133] This includes addressing the IP challenges posed by AI, ensuring that the rights of creators and communities are protected and that AI technologies are developed and used in ways that respect cultural diversity and knowledge systems.

The lack of regulation in the use of AI presents a significant challenge for IP protection in education. As AI technologies evolve rapidly, existing legal frameworks struggle to keep pace. This has led to calls for updated regulations that can address the unique challenges posed by AI, particularly in protecting the rights of educators, students, and communities involved in the creation and dissemination of educational content.[134]

Given these considerations, UNESCO's recommendations highlight the need for a global approach to these issues, advocating for policies that balance the benefits of AI while ensuring the protection of IP rights.[135] This includes promoting transparency in AI systems, ensuring that creators are fairly compensated for their contributions, and fostering international collaboration to develop new frameworks for IP protection in the age of AI.[136]

As for policies, they should promote open access and fair use provisions to support widespread adoption and prevent the monopolization of educational content, ensuring that AI technologies do not hinder access to educational resources.[137] Furthermore, AI systems can inadvertently perpetuate biases present in their training data, affecting the quality and inclusivity of educational content. UNESCO notes that IP laws should also consider ethical implications and cultural sensitivity.[138] Ensuring that AI-generated content respects cultural heritage and diversity is crucial for creating an inclusive educational environment. IP frameworks must evolve to address these ethical considerations and promote culturally respectful AI applications.[139]

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[133] Fengchun Miao, Wayne Holmes, and UNESCO, *Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research* (*UNESCO* 2023) https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386693?locale=en.

[134] UNESCO, *UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence: Key Facts* (2023) https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385082 accessed 23 August 2024.

[135] UNESCO, *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* (2021) https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381137 accessed 23 August 2024.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

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Conclusion and Further Research

As AI becomes more prominent in education, UNESCO plays a crucial role in guiding Member States in its application to enhance human potential and promote equitable access to technological benefits. While AI opens doors to innovation and improved knowledge sharing, it also raises critical concerns around ethics, privacy and fairness. As demonstrated before, without proper regulation of AI, there is a risk of perpetuating social inequalities and discrimination. It is vital for Member States to address the implementation of AI in education in order to align with SDGs 4 and 9. Furthermore, it is imperative to take into consideration the discussion around AI's governance, as highlighted by the United Nations Secretary-General's AI Advisory Body Interim Report, *Governing AI for Humanity*.[140] By presenting a blueprint for managing AI risks and harnessing global potential, the Report emphasized the need for an inclusive, cooperative governance framework to address AI's regulatory gaps.[141] Such a framework is indispensable to ensuring that AI is developed and implemented in ways that benefit all individuals equitably.

Delegates are encouraged to reflect upon how to balance the opportunities offered by AI with the ethical, privacy, and equity challenges it presents in education. Recognizing the unique circumstances of each Member State, delegates should consider how to effectively implement UNESCO's AI guidelines while fostering international cooperation. Key questions for delegates include: How should these international frameworks interact with each Member States' policies to ensure equitable access and avoid discrimination? What role can UNESCO and its partners play in strengthening collaboration and addressing the challenges of AI in education? Finally, how can Member States contribute to achieving SDG 4 and SDG 9 through AI-driven educational innovation?

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