

**Consideration Poverty Alleviation and Capacity Building:
Conceptual and Practical.**

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Following the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development (1995), Poverty Eradication has become a top priority of the UN System. The General Assembly proclaimed in 1996 the First Decade of the United Nations for the Elimination of Poverty (1997-2006). The international community committed itself to the goal of eradicating poverty, considering it to be "as ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind".

The Paper presents a brief overview of some conceptual, analytical and policy approaches to poverty elimination, followed by a presentation of UNESCO's overall approach to poverty eradication and in a third section, a summary of the Organization's current (since the 149th session of the Executive Board) and future action (in the draft 29 C/5) in this field. Also the paper presents a brief description of the Poverty Alleviation and Capacity Building Comprehensive proposed projects in line with UNESCO's conception and action plans designed for implementation in both Jordan and Lebanon simultaneously.

The paper also, will present the current set up of the UNESCO Chair in Poverty Alleviation and Capacity Building, being initiated at the Social Work Program of the University of Jordan. MOST/NLC activities concerning poverty issues will be briefly discussed.

Poverty is highlighted as a significant issue in the priorities of the organization and clearly spelled out in the strategic documents i.e.: Medium term strategy (2002-06) (MTS) and Approved Regular Programme. These two documents plus the general Conference and Executive Board decisions underline the important task of the organization to focus in alleviating poverty in developing countries within the confines of the mandates of the organization i.e.: Education, Science, Culture and Communication.

The recent Executive Board 156EX/Decision 3.4.1 reaffirming the fundamental role of the SHS/MOST programmes endeavor to promote the significance of poverty in terms of policy awareness and strategies to create awareness on the consequences of poverty in developing countries. This proposal is developed to emphasis and demonstrates the determination of the organization to develop well-tailored poverty alleviation projects consistent with national priorities. In view of the fact that Educational, Scientific, cultural and communication aspects are an integral components towards any attempt to alleviate poverty in any developing country.

The poor are estimated to be 1.2 billion, of whom some 90% live in developing countries, and poverty increases by 2% a year world-wide —requires that the phenomenon be precisely identified, measured and monitored in all its complexity, in order to develop relevant policies to reduce and ultimately eliminate it. Such tasks of improving the understanding of poverty and making systematic evaluations of the impact of development policies on poverty are all the more complex that poverty is a strongly context-bound phenomenon, displaying various causalities and forms between and within countries. Below, certain conceptual, analytical and policy frameworks

developed at the international level will be briefly summarized, as they influence the national anti-poverty strategies throughout the world.

This broadened understanding of poverty presents new challenges for its measurement and certainly new opportunities for using and refining proven social science methods of data collection: informal, open-ended questionnaire design and participatory methods based on behavioural mapping for collecting data from small community samples; and larger scale formal standardized questionnaire design for larger sample surveys.

UNESCO's Approach to Poverty Elimination:

UNESCO's way of conceptualizing poverty and developing concrete policies and action strategies is broader than the ones adopted by economic oriented perspectives. The Organization has a strong ethical and normative dimension, which guides the operational level.

To UNESCO, social development, and in particular the transformation of the conditions in which the poverty-stricken groups find themselves, is a human right, as recognized by the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1993).

The Organization sees a strong link between peace-building and poverty elimination. Economic security of individual citizens is a basic component of the culture of peace.

The Organization's integrated, trans-sectoral approach involves going beyond policies and measures which address sectorally certain syndromes of poverty to alleviate the living conditions of the poor, in order to understand and propose actions at the level of the root causes of poverty, whether they have their origins, internationally or nationally, in economic, social, cultural or political structures.

A characteristic of UNESCO's approach to poverty elimination is to place considerations of justice and equity above the level of priority given to economic efficiency, which is a very important means but not an end. The concept of entitlements and policies of "positive inequalities" in favour of the poor, in order to establish equality of chances for all in society is part of the Organization's major concerns.

An area of poverty elimination in which UNESCO has a comparative advantage, is human resource development and capacity-building, broadly defined. This involves formal and non-formal education and training, in relation to productive activities, particularly of girls and women, in poorer areas; training and support in organizational and management fields, so that they develop their economic and political capabilities in generating income and defending their rights and participating in society, as full fledged citizens.

To UNESCO, culture is a basic variable in the analysis of poverty and developing actions for poverty elimination. In this respect, emphasis is laid on the non-economic sources of poverty, such as ethnic conflict and discrimination.

The Proposed projects in Jordan and Lebanon encompass a wide range of interrelated and interdependent activities. Each of which contribute to the overall conception and action plan of the UNESCO. These include, research, awareness raising, cultural works, policy formulation,

program design implementation monitoring and evaluation, as well as community organizing and advocacy.

The proposed project is consistent with UNESCO priorities as advocated in various strategic documents. The specific clauses of the Management of Social Transformation program within the Regular Programme targeting poverty as a cross cutting issue emphasizing on developing strategies and initiate pilot projects to counter impact of poverty in developing countries where you have approximately 1.2 billion people living on 1 dollar per day. The project will also benefit from the multi-disciplinary setting of UNESCO.

This UNESCO/SHS/MOST initiative is consistent with global conferences such as the Cairo (Population & Development), Copenhagen (World Social Summit), Beijing (Women and Development) and Rio (UN Conference Environment & Development) to target poverty as a crosscutting global priority issue. This project will certainly facilitate and mobilize the necessary expertise via the MOST National Committee and the proposed UNESCO Chair in Management of Social Transformation, NGOs, Ministry of Social Development and the local population.