



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



COVID-19
RESPONSE

UNESCO's COVID-19 Response in Cambodia

Building Back Better

OVERVIEW: UNESCO'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN CAMBODIA

The COVID-19 outbreak is more than a global public health crisis; it is an education crisis, socio-economic-crisis, information-crisis, and much more. COVID-19 tells us that continued education must be ensured when so many children today cannot go to school. It is a stark reminder of the importance of quality, reliable information, at a time when rumors are flourishing. It tells about the power of culture and knowledge to strengthen human fabric and solidarity, at a time when so many people around the world must keep social distance and stay at home. It tells us scientific cooperation is key when dealing with a global public health issue.

UNESCO is fully committed to supporting governments for distance learning, open science, knowledge and culture sharing, as fundamental means to stand together and tighten the bonds of our shared humanity.

In Cambodia, UNESCO is working, in partnership with the Royal Government of Cambodia, development partners, NGOs, civil society, private sector, and relevant partners to provide support in responding to COVID-19 pandemic effectively. Through UNESCO's comparative advantages in Education, Culture, Media development and freedom of expression, and Natural sciences, UNESCO is providing technical assistance and resources to support the implementation of the "United Nations Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19: Shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need" in Cambodia.

UNESCO CAMBODIA COVID-19 RESPONSE – LINKAGES TO UN FRAMEWORK FOR IMMEDIATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Five Pillars of UNDS COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response

UNESCO Response - Linkages with Work Areas in socio-economic response to COVID-19

UNESCO's Contribution in Cambodia

1. Health First: Protecting Health Services and Systems during the Crisis

➡ Support on tracking and reaching vulnerable populations

➡ UNESCO is actively participating in the Risk Communication and Community Engagement Working Group to facilitate two-way risk communication between the health authorities and the public through journalists and media professionals.

2. Protecting People: Social Protection and Basic Services

➡ Secure sustained learning for all children, and adolescents, preferably in schools

➡ UNESCO is providing support to Cambodian education system during COVID-19 to ensure continuous education through digital and distance learning for early grades, lower secondary students, teacher education and non-formal education, with a gender-sensitive approach.

➡ UNESCO is providing support and technical assistance in developing the Education Response and Recovery Plan.

3. Economic Response and Recovery: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers

➡ Integrated, country-specific policy advice and programme support

➡ UNESCO is participating in UNCT's Social Protection Accelerator, and assessing the impact on workers in the culture and tourism sector, and analyzing the nexus between education and employment/job opportunities in the post COVID-19 scenario, with a focus on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)/skills education.

➡ Support to young people and social partners in entrepreneurship and social innovation in response to COVID-19

➡ UNESCO has launched, [Code the Curve Hackathon](#), in partnership with IBM and SAP, to support young innovators, date scientists to develop digital and innovative solutions to counter the COVID-19 pandemic.

➡ Rapid and gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments and labor market and business environment diagnostics

➡ UNESCO is participating in Social and Economic Impact Assessments to measure improvements needed to reach informal workers in the tourism and culture sectors and provide support to Small and Medium Enterprises related to cultural and natural heritage.

➡ Business linkages support

➡ UNESCO is providing technical assistance to strengthen the recovery of the tourism sector, which is a major driver of economic growth in Cambodia, by developing and implementing COVID-19 safety mechanisms at cultural and tourism destinations.

4. Macroeconomic Response an Multilateral Collaboration

➡ Stepped-up technical support to member states in improving the evidence base for policy making, including in the emergency response.

➡ UNESCO is identifying and sharing local income-generating and nature-based solutions, and providing platform for scientific research and policy-making to the government to mitigate the economic impact.

➡ UNESCO is providing support for the realization of SDG4 targets and its financing, and providing technical assistance for budgeting of the education system and strengthening Education Management Information System.

➡ UNESCO is participating actively in the Education Sector Working Group to provide educational policy advice and gender-sensitive data to mitigate the impact of school closure and prepare for reopening of schools.

5. Social Cohesion and Community Resilience

➡ Inclusive social dialogue, advocacy, and political engagement

➡ Empower community resilience, participation, and equitable service delivery

➡ Support to governance, fundamental freedoms and rule of law

➡ As the lead UN agency for promoting freedom of expression and access to information, UNESCO is working in collaboration with local media stakeholders, including OHCHR and development partners, to safeguard freedom of expression, access to information, press freedom and safety of journalists, in the COVID-19 response through advocacy and social media awareness-raising campaigns.

➡ UNESCO is providing technical assistance and undertaking extensive advocacy to tackle disinformation and hate speech, through enhancing capacities of journalists and media stakeholders on ethical reporting, fact-checking, tackling the spread of disinformation, especially on social media, and promoting media and information literacy competencies.

➡ UNESCO is providing dialogue platforms and collaboration mechanisms between the Ministry of Health, WHO and the public, including journalists, through live Facebook discussion.

➡ UNESCO is in the process of designing and implementing a series of initiatives and advocacy campaigns to build community resilience, and promote intercultural dialogue to foster social cohesion and peace, including through supporting diverse cultural and artistic expressions.

EDUCATION: STRENGTHENING DIGITAL AND DISTANCE LEARNING





More than 1.5 billion students and youth across the planet are affected by school and university closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). These nationwide closures are impacting over 90% of the world's student population. Several countries have implemented localized closures impacting millions of additional learners.

UNESCO is supporting countries in their efforts to mitigate the immediate impact of school closures, particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning.

The Global Education Coalition launched by UNESCO seeks to facilitate inclusive learning opportunities for children and youth during this period of sudden and unprecedented educational disruption. Investment in remote learning should both mitigate the immediate disruption caused by COVID-19 and establish approaches to develop more open and flexible education systems for the future.





The Coalition aims to help countries in mobilizing resources and implementing innovative and context-appropriate solutions to provide education remotely, leveraging hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech approaches. It seeks equitable solutions and universal access. It ensures coordinated responses and avoid overlapping efforts, and facilitates the return of students to school when they reopen to avoid an upsurge in dropout rates.

In Cambodia, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), with the support of UNESCO and development partners, has taken actions to ensure school children are safe, protected and able to access opportunities for continuous learning.

Following the decision of the MoEYS to close all schools from the 16 of March 2020 until further notice, UNESCO has been working closely with the Ministry to ensure continuity of early grade education, including through working with teachers and the Primary Education Department to develop online video lessons, with contents focused on Mathematics and Khmer Literacy, and promoting digital adult literacy programmes. In partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, UNESCO is working on upgrading Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) initiatives, including skills for employment, through digital learning platforms.

UNESCO's continued interventions to support digital and distance learning during the school closure and post COVID-19 recovery, is made possible under the framework of UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED). CapED aims to translate dialogue and advocacy for the global education agenda into concrete action at the country level to offer quality educational opportunities for all in line with SDG4 targets. Through CapED, UNESCO has been providing targeted assistance to reinforce national capacities and offering quality education opportunities for all in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), with a particular focus on gender equality and empowerment of girls and women across all areas of intervention. CapED is supported by Dubai Cares, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Gender mainstreaming has been prioritised throughout UNESCO's interventions to ensure both male and female at any stage of life can have access to quality formal and non-formal education in line with SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). This is also reflected in the utilization and development of learning and teaching materials, which are gender-sensitive, as well as in the creation of COVID 19 teaching teams where gender parity is guaranteed.



ENSURING CONTINUOUS LEARNING FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED IN EARLY GRADES

In Cambodia, UNESCO is a key player in supporting Early Grade Learning through Strengthening Teacher Education Programmes in Cambodia (STEPCam), funded by the Global Partnership for Education.

As an immediate response, the STEPCam has released funds to Primary Education Department of the MoEYS to develop video lessons on Mathematics and Khmer Literacy, to ensure continuous learning of more than 1 million children in early grades (1-3).

To further strengthen distance-learning, UNESCO secured emergency funds from CapED to develop video lessons on Mathematics and Khmer Literacy for children in Grades 1 to 3, covering the period of 20 April to 30 May 2020. Content development and video production of 60 clips of daily exercises for Mathematics (30 clips) and Khmer Literacy (30 clips) are also underway, with equipment being purchased to facilitate the production of all learning materials.

All video lessons will be inclusive of sign language for children who have hearing impairments or auditory challenges, as well as an introduction to share COVID-19 prevention healthy behaviors to increase community awareness.

The video lessons will be initially broadcasted live on [Krou Cambodia](#) and [Komar Rien Koma Cheh](#), the MoEYS's official Facebook page for Early Grade Learning. The edited versions, with download option, will be uploaded on the following platforms: [MoEYS E-learning platform](#), [MoEYS Facebook page](#), [MoEYS Youtube Channel](#), phone application of E-School Cambodia: EG1 (For Grade 1), EG2 (For Grade 2) and EG3 (For Grade 3), and the educational channel, TV Techo.

UNESCO is also supporting the production of one TV spot to be broadcasted on national channels to increase community awareness about the availability of all online learning resources and about the key role parents can and must play to support the learning of their children during the school closure.

BASIC EDUCATION EQUIVALENCY PROGRAMME (BEEP)

BEEP is a joint initiative between UNESCO, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT). It is part of the UN joint programme on skill development, with financial support from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), to provide a flexible, self-paced alternative learning platform for lower secondary school dropouts.

The BEEP Platform offers 11 online subjects ranging from Khmer, Math, Physics, Chemistry, Computer, etc. Students can access this interactive learning platform free-of-charge, through computers and mobile devices.

In light of the COVID-19 situation, in March 2020, the [BEEP platform](#) has been made public by the MoEYS, as a supplementary learning resource for 610,000 students enrolled in lower secondary schools. Since March, more than 5,000 secondary school students have accessed the BEEP Platform to continue their learning. UNESCO has secured additional funding for BEEP through CapED window for the COVID-19 response.

The BEEP platform is instrumental for Cambodian students who have been instructed to self-study at home throughout the school closure period and beyond. To effectively respond to the new context needs, UNESCO is also scaling up its efforts to provide continuous learning opportunities for the non-formal education sector, to ensure at least 300,000 (50% female) lower secondary school students and out-of-school youth can continue to access the most up-to-date learning resources through the BEEP platform.

In partnership with Department of Information Technology, General Secondary Education Department and Non-Formal Education Department of MoEYS, UNESCO is upgrading the capacity of the BEEP platform to ensure continued learning of more learners; increasing access to education among the most marginalized groups by opening BEEP Learning Centers in remote areas; providing supplementary, alternative and flexible learning opportunities to students currently enrolled at lower secondary schools.

Additional 60 video lessons for six subjects, including Khmer, English, Math level I, Math level II, Physics and Chemistry will be produced, broadcasted live on [MoEYS E-learning platform](#), [MoEYS Facebook page](#), [MoEYS Youtube Channel](#), and available on the [BEEP platform](#).



NATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME (NLP)



Numerous factories closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which negatively affected Cambodian industrial sectors. The garment sector was one of the most heavily affected, disrupting education efforts of most employees (85% are women, of whom 14% are illiterate and 29% with low literacy levels) who are enrolled in the Factory Literacy Program funded by UNESCO, in an attempt to become literate and obtain a grade 6 equivalency certificate.

Through the Factory Literacy Program (FLP), UNESCO has been providing learning opportunities for workers across 25 factories in nine provinces, enrolling over 1,783 learners (90% are women). Given the COVID-19 situation, UNESCO is facilitating continued access to a broad-based and up-graded curriculum, with a particular focus on family health and nutrition. Visit the [FLP Facebook page](#) for more information.

UNESCO, in close collaboration with the MoEYS, is also providing continuous education opportunities for women who have lost jobs, and expanding access to Non-Formal Education (NFE) for the most marginalized communities in Cambodia through online learning resources.

The intervention includes the development of an interactive mobile application and a digital learning platform where the digitalized National Literacy Programme (NLP) will be offered to facilitate self-learning for the most vulnerable communities. At the same time, 80 video lessons of the NFE Programme will be digitalized and broadcasted live initially on [MoEYS E-learning platform](#), [MoEYS Facebook page](#), [MoEYS Youtube Channel](#), and subsequently made available for download on the MoEYS/NFE platform. Through the NFE platform, UNESCO will support the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) of MoEYS to expand its network to communities across Cambodia, to identify multiple spaces, including factories, community learning centers (CLCs) and pagodas, where learners can have access to the platform and receive support from nationally trained facilitators. Main partners at the sub-national level are the 25 Provincial Office of Education (PoEYS), the District Office of Education (DoEYS), Communes, and chief of villages who will be mobilized to sustainably manage the literacy class enrollment and the classes, in coordination with the DNFE and National Facilitators. The new NFE platform will allow learners to complete programs online; only exams have to be taken in one of the NFE Community Learning Centers under the supervision of the National Facilitators.

It is estimated that at least 23,000 (70% female) adults with no basic literacy skills will be reached through this intervention.

UNESCO is also distributing 4090 health messaging posters to all learning centers to contribute to the national effort to prevent community transmission of COVID-19 in Cambodia.

STRENGTHENING EDUCATION SECTOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PREPARING COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

UNESCO, as an active member of the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), advocates for the strengthening of coordinated, long term and sustainable interventions, which keep focusing on strengthening the existing MoEYS systems and mechanisms for COVID-19 response. UNESCO considers the ESWG as a collaborative platform for sector policy dialogue between the government and education partners, where UNESCO continues to advocate for quality education, solidarity and continuity of learning, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized communities.



UNESCO has contributed to the awareness goals of the ESWG supporting the circulation of COVID-19 Education and Hygiene Information Communication products, developed by various development partners on several platforms, reaching more than 5000 individuals on a daily basis. UNESCO is also contributing to the programmatic debate on how to reopen schools and how to protect children online, translating relevant technical documents to assist the ESWG members and the MoEYS.

UNESCO has also provided technical assistance to develop E-learning Guidelines for Provincial and District Offices of Education, School Directors and Teachers, and monitoring tools to strengthen the mechanisms for supporting parents and teachers during the E-learning phase and gathering data to inform the decision-making process.

In partnership with USAID, UNESCO is liaising with the International School of Phnom Penh to facilitate the exchange of best practices and mechanisms to ensure quality, inclusive and equitable distance learning from early childhood to upper secondary education.

UNESCO will also work closely with Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and development partners on the design and implementation of the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding to support Cambodia's Education sector response to COVID-19. The funding will support mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector as well as the recovery of the education system from the crisis.

CULTURE: A FORCE FOR RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL COHESION





In moments of crisis, people need culture. In moments of cultural crisis, UNESCO is present.

COVID-19 has brought into stark relief, as crises often do, the necessity of culture for people and communities. At a time when billions of people are physically separated from one another, culture brings us together. It provides comfort, inspiration and hope at a time of enormous anxiety and uncertainty. UNESCO is encouraging World Heritage sites to follow suit, and UNESCO platforms such as [World Heritage Journeys in Europe](#) are offering a means for people to explore World Heritage from their homes.

To address the profound impact that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on the culture sector, UNESCO has developed an action plan focusing on four key pillars:

- ①. Communication, advocacy and awareness-raising;
- ②. Impact assessment of the cultural sector and support for public policies;
- ③. Support for artists, culture professionals and communities;
- ④. Capacity-building and resources to safeguard cultural heritage.

Given this situation, UNESCO has launched a number of campaigns. One of them is a weekly “[Culture & COVID-19: Impact and Response Tracker](#)”, aiming to provide an overview of the rapidly evolving situation. It explores both the immediate impact of the health crisis and examples of how countries around the world are adapting to the situation. This is one of several initiatives UNESCO undertakes to respond to the impact of the pandemic on the cultural sector worldwide.

Over 130 Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Culture joined a global online meeting convened by UNESCO to discuss actions to bolster the cultural sector, which is facing unprecedented upheaval due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of the direct effects of the current crisis on tourism, museums, cultural production and artists, as well as the measures being taken around the world to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

More information on UNESCO's global culture response can be found [here](#).

In the midst of the global pandemic, UNESCO has assessed the situation of the cultural institutions and sites as well as the impact of COVID-19 in culture and tourism sectors. In Cambodia, although three World Heritages Sites in the country such as Angkor, Preah Vihear and Sambor Prei Kuk are still open to the visitors, other cultural and tourism destinations such as Museums, the Royal Palace, cinemas are closed and stopped receiving visitors from 18 March 2020.

On 11 April 2020, the Ministry of Tourism has announced that almost half of the approximate 630,000 workers in the tourism sector have lost their jobs due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. According to the data of the Ministry of Tourism, the country had 931,826 foreign visitors during the first two months of this year, a decline of 50 percent compared with the same period last year before the COVID-19. The decline in inbound tourists in March and April has been further worsened due to the imposed travel bans in Cambodia. Given this situation, the Ministry of Tourism has now secured \$2.4 million of wage subsidies in total, to provide \$40 each month to unemployed workers across the tourism sector working in hotels, guest houses, restaurants and as tour operators.

UNESCO Phnom Penh office has been providing technical assistance to strengthen culture-related impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in Cambodia through its proactive engagement with a wide range of Culture stakeholders in the country.

UNESCO is actively contributing to UNCT's Social and Economic Impact Assessments of the COVID-19, in order to assess the immediate social and economic effects on households, including those engaged in the tourism/culture/performing arts sectors, and inform mitigation measures linked to particularly vulnerable strata of the population. UNESCO is supporting the process to build evidence on the social and economic impacts of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) throughout the pandemic to inform short to medium-term mitigation programmes



and policies, and ensure availability of information on medium to long-term socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 on the vulnerable households in Cambodia, especially in relation to tourism and culture related sectors.

UNESCO is currently working closely with the Royal Government of Cambodia, development partners, and relevant stakeholders to support socio-economic response to COVID-19 through the recovery of tourism and culture activities. The interventions include:

1. Promoting UNESCO's Key Culture-related COVID-19 campaigns and initiatives in Cambodia:

#ShareOurHeritage: UNESCO has launched a global social media campaign, #ShareOurHeritage to promote access to culture and education around cultural heritage during this time of mass confinement. It provides up-to-date information through an online map on its website and social media on the impact of, and responses to, COVID-19 on World Heritage sites, which are partly or fully closed to visitors in 89% of countries due to the pandemic.

UNESCO has provided technical assistance to the Government of Cambodia, in cooperation with the APSARA National Authority, to report on Angkor Site management during COVID-19 pandemic. A video report has been prepared which can be accessed here: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2101/>.



#ResiliArt: In order to raise awareness about the impact of COVID-19 on the culture sector and the livelihoods of artists and cultural professionals, UNESCO has set-up an online platform to give visibility to artists worldwide, to ensure their voices are heard at the policy level to address existing gaps and needs. In partnership with the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), UNESCO organized two initiatives; ResiliArt Debate on 15 April 2020 and ResiliArt Movement.

On 15 April 2020, World Art Day, UNESCO launched a global movement, ResiliArt, with an inaugural virtual debate. The two-hour discussion was further enriched by over 600 comments and questions posted by over 1,100 viewers around the world. ResiliArt is a movement that belongs to artists, cultural institutions, and culture sector stakeholders. They are encouraged to start their own ResiliArt exchange using an institutional guide and a participation guide available on UNESCO's [ResiliArt website](#).

To encourage creativity, UNESCO is inviting children between ages 6 and 12 to draw a UNESCO World Heritage site that matters to them, and from April until 17 May 2020. This could be a World Heritage site in their own community, a memory from a recent family vacation, or a place they saw in a book, movie or TV show. UNESCO will be exhibiting a selection of these drawings, chosen for their artistry, originality and diversity, on the UNESCO website.

2. Strengthening post-COVID-19 Tourism Sector Recovery by developing and strengthening COVID-19 safety mechanisms at Cultural and Tourism Destinations in Cambodia

Considering the uncertainty of convergence of COVID-19 and the negative impact of prolonged restriction measures on people's movement, it will be of vital importance to inform communities and visitors of the government's initiative on ensuring safety and hygiene at cultural and tourism sites in Cambodia. UNESCO will provide technical assistance to develop guidelines, instructions, monitoring mechanisms and advocacy campaigns at the cultural and tourism sites for an effective protective measure against the COVID-19. These guidelines will not only mitigate the risk of COVID but will ensure the safety of locals, tourists and staff working on the heritage sites and beyond.

3. Culture team is currently exploring opportunities to promote the Ministry of Tourism's guide certificate program through the BEEP platform. This is to promote a national basic guide certificate to those who are currently at home and looking for a job opportunity.

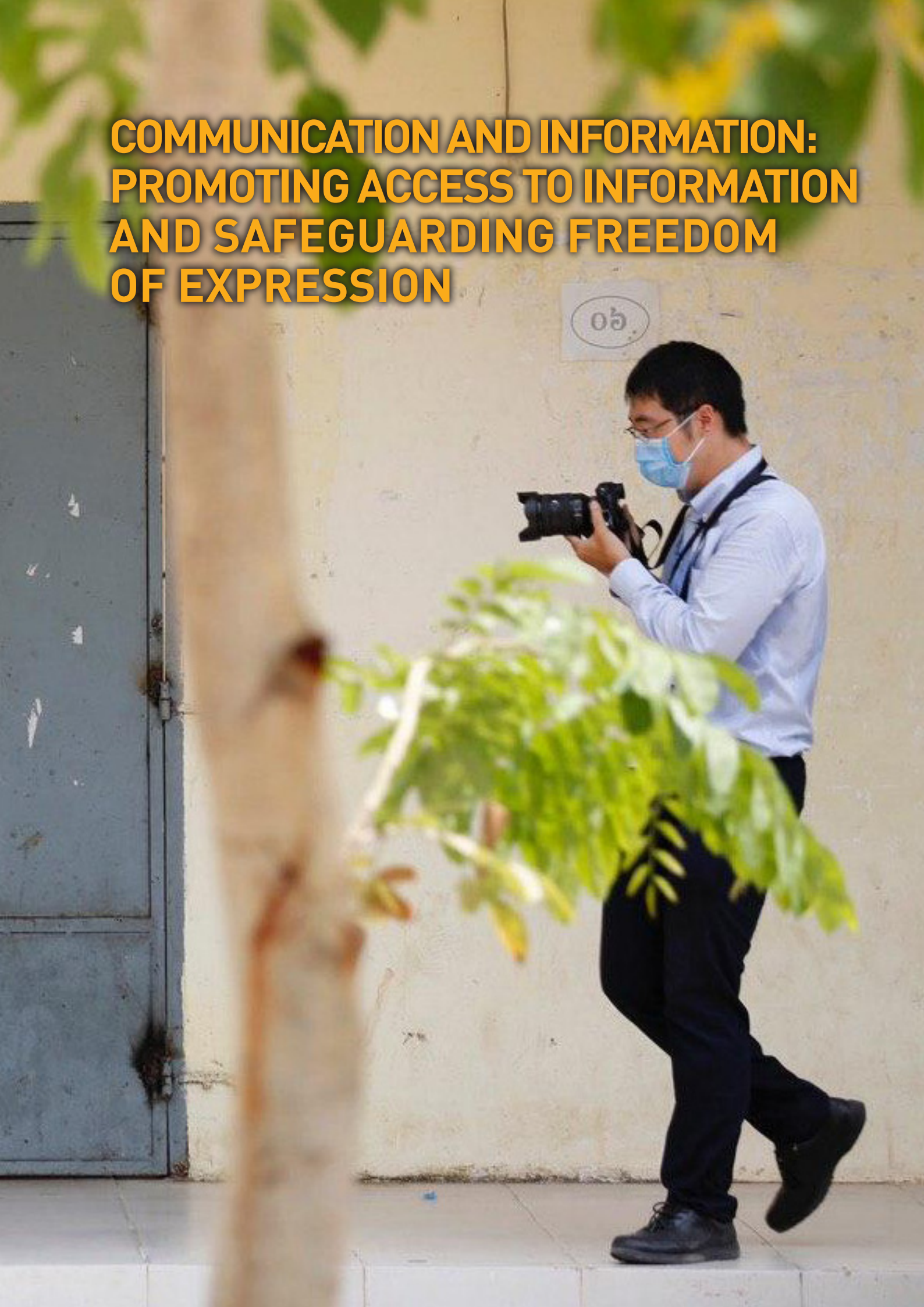
4. Heritage Education initiative using Augmented Reality (AR)/Virtual Reality (VR)

In order to promote heritage education, PNP has been exploring together with a leading IT company in Cambodia, on how AR/VR app can be used at WH sites in Cambodia. This is an attempt to create positive a impact on information, education, and culture, and the combination of which is envisioned to ultimately position Cambodia as a leading digital enabler.

5. Culture team is also doing the following usual activities to assist the Government, including applying for UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, Intangible Heritage nomination, World Heritage Tentative List modification; and applying for 11th call for applications of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD).



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION: PROMOTING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION



The COVID-19 pandemic is being accompanied by a “disinfodemic”. In a context where access to reliable and timely information is more needed than ever, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech are flooding social media, making it difficult for the public to access the information they need to stay healthy and safe. Now more than ever, the public needs access to information. It is critical that the authorities provide maximum transparency, and journalists adhere to the highest ethical standards to dispel rumours, and keep the public accurately informed about ongoing developments.

UNESCO's global commitment and approaches to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic include ensuring freedom of expression, access to public information, especially on public health, and quality news coverage; countering disinformation and misinformation; empowering media to cover the COVID-19 crisis through specialized capacity development - paying special attention to press freedom and the physical and psychological safety of journalists covering this topic; and increasing access to scientific information for journalists, scientists and policy-makers through Open Access repositories.

In Cambodia, UNESCO is working in collaboration with a wide range of media stakeholders, including OHCHR, and development partners, to advocate for and safeguard freedom of expression, press freedom and access to information in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. UNESCO's initiatives aim to ensure that the public has equal access to timely and reliable information; to secure the safety of journalists while reporting on the health crisis; and to address 'information disorders', including disinformation, misinformation and hate speech, which can put in danger the health of the public and stigmatize groups and communities who are being affected by the pandemic.

To address the specific needs of journalists and reporters during the crisis, UNESCO has launched a [social media campaign in Khmer](#) to build capacities of Cambodian journalists and social media reporters on access to information, fact-checking to debunk disinformation, ethical reporting and psychological and physical safety in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. The series of social media key messages and the awareness-raising video are expected to have reached more than 5K social media users, particularly journalists and media professionals.

In parallel, to strengthen access to information and collaboration mechanisms between authorities handling the crisis, health experts and the media, UNESCO, has launched a live Facebook discussion to provide journalists with a platform to access information from key informants and official sources, including the Ministry of Health, WHO, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Cambodia. The [Facebook live discussion in Khmer](#) took place on 28 April 2020 and has reached 11.9k views.



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#Covid19 #WorldPressFreedomDay #ទិវាសេរីភាពសារព័ត៌មានពិភពលោក

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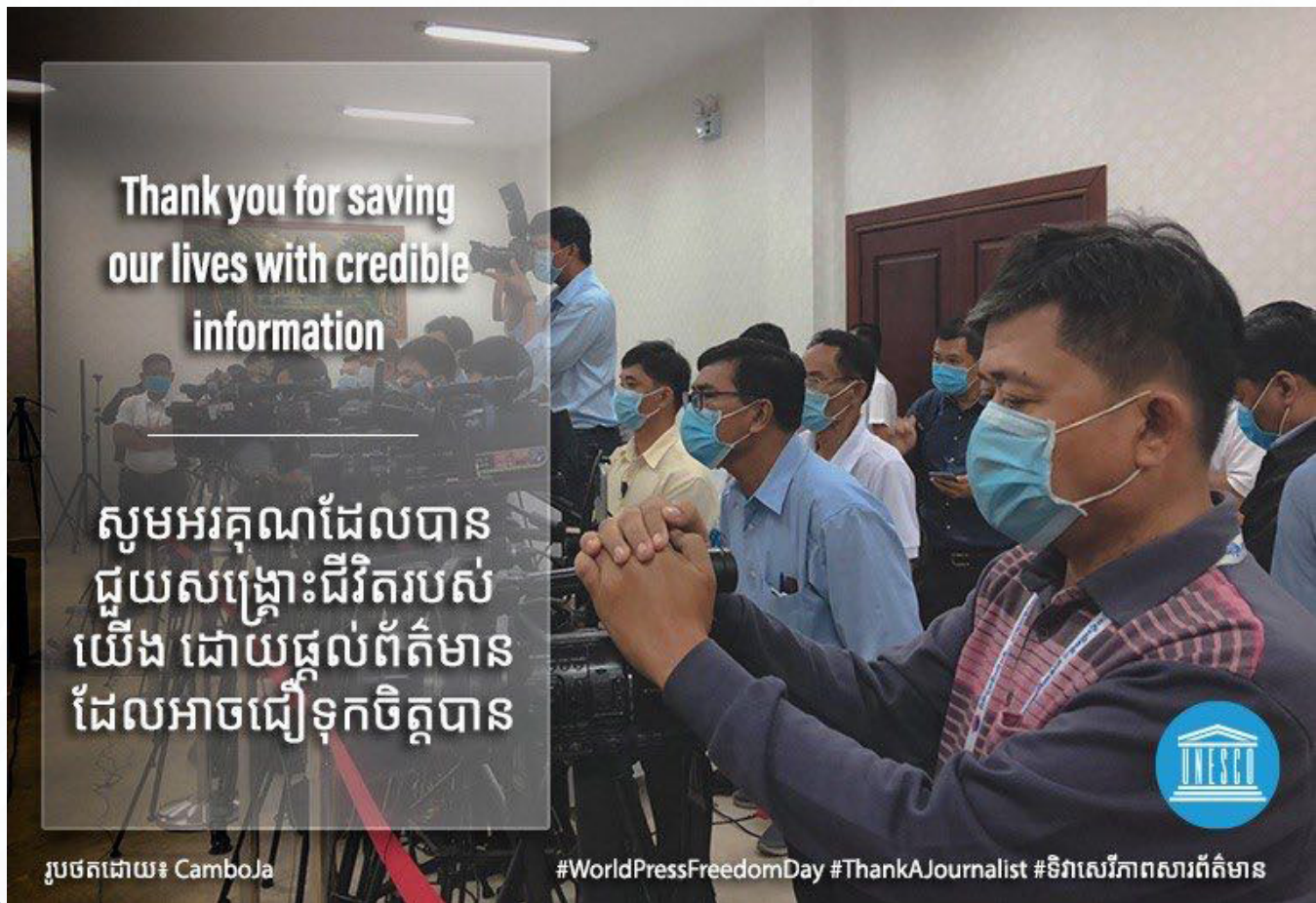
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As part of its work to address “information disorders”, UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information of the Royal Government of Cambodia, is planning a virtual dissemination of the Khmer version of the manual “Journalism, ‘Fake News’ and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training”. This tool, first of its kind in Cambodia, is even more relevant during the COVID-19 crisis, as it will help journalists and media professionals, journalism educators and students to report ethically through media and information literacy and fact-checking, and to enhance understanding on how quality and credibility of journalism could curb the spread of disinformation, especially on social media.

To foster a more media and information literate public, UNESCO is engaging with Cambodian influencers to launch the social media campaign #DontGoViral. Through this initiative, key opinion leaders and artists will deliver educational messages to improve the public’s capacities to access the right information and critically consume and share content in social media.

Another element derived from the Covid-19 “infodemic”, is the stigmatization of certain nationalities and social groups. To address this, UNESCO and the artists’ community in Cambodia will turn street art into powerful messages of anti-discrimination and solidarity, to promote unity and diversity in the fight with the virus.

Joining the global commemoration of World Press Freedom Day (3rd May), UNESCO Phnom Penh Office has developed a series of communication content and materials in Khmer, to raise awareness among the public on the importance of free media in providing the public with credible independent information, which is vital in times of crisis. Starting from 3rd May, UNESCO has started a week-long social media campaign to widely disseminate the produced materials across Cambodia. The communication kit has also been shared inclusively with a wide range of media stakeholders, including development partners, media houses, journalists’ associations, civil-society, NGOs, Ministry of Information and academic institutions, inviting them to join the global celebration. In conjunction, UNESCO has produced a series of posters to show appreciation to journalists for providing credible information to the general public, with the hashtag, #ThankAJournalist.



RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)

The RCCE Working Group is tasked to coordinate activities among international partners to ensure messages are consistent and develop joint planning for scenario three. UNESCO is also actively participating in fostering the effectiveness of the two-way risk communication between health authorities, including the Ministry of Health and WHO, and the general public through journalists and media professionals, who play a critical role in providing the wider community with credible and lifesaving health-related information in layman language. They also serve as a bridge by conveying the needs of the public, including the marginalized and vulnerable communities to authorities to inform their communication strategies.



NATURAL SCIENCES: OPEN SCIENCE AND REINFORCED SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

COVID-19 tells us scientific cooperation is key when dealing with a global public health issue. The COVID-19 pandemic raises our awareness of the importance of science, both in research and international cooperation. The present crisis also demonstrates the urgency of stepping up information sharing through open science.

As the UN agency with a specific mandate for Science, UNESCO advocates for governments to reinforce scientific cooperation and integrate open science in their research programmes to prevent and mitigate global crises. UNESCO has over 35 Category 2 Centers and Chairs in its global network in Microbiology and Life Sciences which are at the forefront of research in various aspects of COVID-19.

UNESCO's Director General has emphasized that, "The COVID-19 pandemic raises our awareness of the importance of science, both in research and international cooperation. The present crisis also demonstrates the urgency of stepping up information sharing through open science. The time has come for us to commit all together."



UNESCO promotes Open Science through a variety of initiatives, including pooling of knowledge, measures to support scientific research, and the reduction of the knowledge gap among countries, and mobilizes decision-makers, researchers, innovators, publishers and civil society to allow free access to scientific data, research findings, educational resources and research facilities. UNESCO advocates for reinforcement of links between science and policy decisions, to meet societal needs, and the opening of science to society while borders are closed.

In March 2020, UNESCO mobilized representatives from over 122 countries, including 77 ministers, through an online meeting, to promote open science and reinforced cooperation, and to exchange views on the role of international cooperation in science and increased investment in the face of COVID-19.

Senior officials from Cambodia participated in this important meeting, where unanimous support was given to UNESCO to coordinate an international Open Science coalition to respond to pandemics, environmental crises and other global threats, and to reduce the knowledge gap, including by sharing experiences on the current crises and ways in which to address future crises through scientific knowledge.

In Cambodia, UNESCO is assessing the impact on ecosystem goods and services, including community-based tourism, provided by natural sites in Cambodia, to ensure restoration of these services, and assess steps to build resilience for continued sustainable development. UNESCO is

working closely with the Royal Government of Cambodia, and relevant stakeholders, to strengthen natural resource management, putting in place the elements to strengthen people's resilience, through scientific solutions and increased scientific cooperation. UNESCO's designated sites, including Biosphere Reserves, are powerful tools to remedy at least part of the misunderstanding between humankind and nature through the integrated approach of valorizing nature via conservation, restoration, transmission and sustainable development.

UNESCO is working with Government and relevant partners, including the private sector, at the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve (TSBR), and other natural sites across the country, to strengthen people's resilience by identifying and sharing local income-generating solutions that will mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic, such as new trades related to the green economy, ecological restoration and local ecotourism.

Through engaging various stakeholders in Cambodia and the region, UNESCO is working towards providing platforms at the interface of scientific research and policy-making, to explore opportunities to promote a more sustainable use of natural resources, and innovative community-based models to strengthen livelihoods of people living in and around the natural sites.



UNESCO is working with partners to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into school-education, including designing and developing supplementary learning materials. UNESCO will develop digital learning materials and initiatives to strengthen advocacy for effective natural resource management in the post-COVID-19 scenario, including in relation to environmental conservation, sustainable livelihoods development around natural heritage sites, for “building back better”.

Access to clean and safe water and sanitation is critical and indispensable during crisis-situations. An integrated approach to human health and water resources management is urgently required. UNESCO will work with water managers and stakeholders to equip them with knowledge, scientific tools and skills, to develop policies to manage water resources sustainably, especially in times of crisis, including for vulnerable groups residing in and around TSBR and other natural sites in Cambodia.

UNESCO Cambodia

address: P.O Box 29
#38, Samdech Sothearos Blvd.,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Tel: +(855) 23 72 30 54

E-mail: phnompenh@unesco.org

website: <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/phnompenh>

facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unescophnompenh>

twitter: <https://twitter.com/UnescoCambodia>

instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/unescocambodia/>

For more information, please contact:

Mr. Sardar Umar Alam

UNESCO Representative to Cambodia

Email: su.alam@unesco.org