

HMDC Presents... UNESCO: Video 2 Transcripts

These are the words spoken in the two Video 2 films for UNESCO (The United Nations and International Efforts). We read along while we watch, pause at each time mark, and circle any word we do not know so we can look it up together.

VIDEO 2 (EXPLAINER)

[0:00] Welcome, delegates. Let's jump right into this explainer. Today, we're zooming in on the United Nations response to the pandemic education crisis. We are going to examine exactly what international bodies have done to close the digital divide, and more importantly, how your new resolution can help fix the enormous gaps that still remain. Your work here is absolutely vital. Here is our agenda for today. We'll be looking at 1. What the UN has done. 2. Key resolutions and instruments. 3. What is working now. 4. What is not working. 5. Other international efforts. 6. Gaps a resolution fills. Let's get started. What the UN has done. Tracing the institutional response. When the crisis first hit, international bodies actually moved quite quickly.

[0:46] In March 2020, the UN launched the Global Education Coalition. According to ReliefWeb and UNESCO, which we last accessed in October 2026, it gathered more than 150 members to pool resources. Then, as we moved into a recovery phase, on June 23, 2022, the World Bank published the Rapid Recovery Plan to give countries a framework to catch students up. Policies also had to adapt to new tech. On September 7, 2023, the GCED Clearinghouse at UNESCO released formal guidance on artificial intelligence. And looking at physical infrastructure, the International Telecommunication Union, or ITU, opened the Giga Connectivity Center in Geneva on June 25, 2025, to help countries finance school internet. Now, a huge part of this institutional response is about setting safe digital guardrails. For example, in that September 7, 2023 guidance from the GCED Clearinghouse, UNESCO recommended a strict minimum age of 13 to use generative AI in classrooms. Children younger than that are incredibly vulnerable to data tracking.

[1:47] At the same time, the UN is sharing safe digital tools. UNICEF oversees the Gateways to Public Digital Learning Platform, a project where countries share vetted lessons. We last accessed that data in October 2026. Guardrails and shared resources must absolutely go hand-in-hand to help students. Key Resolutions and Instruments, Your Legal Toolkit As a delegate, you need to know exactly which rules and agreements currently exist. Whenever you write or speak, you must name your precedent by symbol and year. Here's your toolkit. Your foundation is A-R-E-S-70-1 from 2015. For specific pandemic responses, cite the General Assembly Resolution A-R-E-S-74-306 from 2020, along with Human Rights Council Resolutions A-H-R-C-R-E-S-44-3 from 2020 and A-H-R-C-R-E-S-47-6 from 2021.

[2:45] For modern tech challenges, you've got A-R-E-S-79-1 from 2024, which adopted the Global Digital Compact, and A-R-E-S-194-1 [Our report says: A/RES/79/194], also from 2024. Finally, do not forget the UNESCO recommendation on Open Educational Resources from 2019 and the recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence from 2021. What is working now? Proven and desirable outcomes. We really need to look at what is actually producing desirable outcomes in the real world. The evidence clearly shows that simple, organized methods help the most. Low-tech learning that includes actual human contact, like phone calls from teachers, helps students significantly more than just handing out screens. Furthermore, shared frameworks and fast partnerships help reach students efficiently by pooling international resources. It prevents every country from having to invent their own solutions from scratch. There's also a lot of honest self-reflection happening. Take a look at this 2023 review published by the GCED Clearinghouse at UNESCO.

[3:48] They titled it an EdTech Tragedy? Let that title sink in. This report admits that relying too heavily on connected technology during school closures often caused unintended harm. Instead of bridging the gap, expensive, unproven platforms often excluded the poorest students who lacked internet, widening the divide. Technology must help humans, not replace them. What is not working? Stark data and undesirable realities. Conversely, we have to face the undesirable realities. First, it would be incorrect to assume that education was prioritized during the crisis. According to a March 30, 2022 report from the World Bank, only 3% of global COVID-19 stimulus money went to education. Just 3%. The vast majority was spent elsewhere, leaving schools completely under-resourced at the exact moment they needed to radically transform. The lack of preparation was also severe.

[4:43] A report published on the World Bank blogs on June 28, 2023 showed that only 18% of poorer countries had an explicit plan to help students recover lost learning. This means 82% of those nations were flying blind. Without a plan, proven methods simply aren't used, and children are left behind. And what about the digital tools that were actually built? UNICEF reported on December 21, 2022 that one in three national learning platforms built during the pandemic just stopped working or were abandoned. Additionally, student privacy remains highly undesirable. Drawing on the UNESCO GEM report, the World Education Blog noted on January 23, 2025 that only 16% of countries guarantee education data privacy by law. That leaves millions of children's data completely vulnerable. Other international efforts, global partners filling gaps. Looking outside the UN, other international groups are stepping up.

[5:39] Remember that shocking statistic about only 3% of stimulus going to education? To help combat that immense financial need, the Global Partnership for Education launched an emergency fund of more than US\$500 million on June 1, 2020. This critical money showed exactly where emergency financing is most desperately needed when national governments fail to invest. Other organizations also provided targeted support. The OECD reported on December 5, 2023 that strong teacher support boosts student test scores significantly on PISA assessments. Human Rights Watch issued specific recommendations to protect child data on May 25, 2022, urging governments to audit learning apps. And J-PAL published evidence from rigorous, randomized trials on June 13, 2022, proving that low-tech interventions really do help students learn effectively. Gaps a resolution fills. Your directive.

[6:32] The blueprint of remaining gaps that your new resolution can fill. You can mandate a standing emergency education fund, so money is ready before the next crisis hits. You can require that every member state write a national emergency learning plan. You can establish strict universal education privacy laws. And finally, you can ensure that any new technology is scientifically tested to prove it helps learning before a government buys it at scale. As you head into committee, I want to leave you with this final, provocative thought. According to a 2024 UNESCO report, the world is facing a massive shortage of 44 million primary and secondary teachers. Technology is just a tool. It cannot replace the human connection required for true learning. So, delegates, how will your resolution close the 44 million teacher shortage? Good luck out there.

VIDEO 2 (CINEMATIC)

[0:00] In early 2020, classrooms worldwide sat empty as the pandemic forced immediate, mandatory school closures. The disruption severed 1.5 billion students from their education, creating an immediate and total reliance on remote learning. In response to the closures, the United Nations launched the UNESCO Global Education Coalition in March 2020, bringing together over 150 international agencies. This network rapidly deployed interventions across 70 countries, using tools like community radio networks to broadcast localized lessons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United Nations proved it could assemble a massive administrative framework in weeks. But establishing an emergency coalition does not automatically bridge a physical technology gap.

[0:47] To reach students without home internet, the international community began a push to map and physically connect offline schools. The International Telecommunication Union and UNICEF established the Giga Connectivity Center in Geneva to coordinate and finance this global school connection effort. This timeline tracks the UN's legislative push to set operating rules for digital education, adopting formal recommendations on open educational resources and early ethical standards for artificial intelligence. Yet, UNESCO later published a 652-page self-review titled *An EdTech Tragedy*. The report conceded that while the legal and infrastructural groundwork was impressive, rushing to heavy reliance on connected technology often excluded the poorest learners and introduced unintended harm.

[1:35] To understand which strategies actually drove learning recovery, we have to evaluate the ground-level data. The most effective interventions often bypassed broadband internet entirely, relying instead on basic cell phones, televisions, and local radio broadcasts. This bar chart displays the results of a remote learning trial in Botswana. Text messages alone had no clear effect on math scores. But adding short weekly phone calls from teachers raised learning by .12 standard deviations. The World Bank and UN agencies formalized this approach in the RAPID framework and Smart Buys ranking. They rated grouping students by their actual skill level as a highly cost-effective investment, while handing out computer hardware without teacher support performed poorly. The data clarifies the policy directive.

[2:23] Human connection and targeted instruction drive educational recovery. Hardware is secondary. But executing human-centered instruction at scale requires funding and precise logistical planning. This pie chart shows global COVID-19 stimulus spending. Governments allocated just 3% of emergency funds to education. Only 18% of low- and lower-middle-income countries explicitly planned to recover lost learning. Furthermore, of 471 national digital platforms built, one-third were eventually shut down or abandoned. An international coalition can draft targets and frameworks, but without dedicated domestic funding and concrete national planning, the machinery of recovery stalls. To compensate for these structural blind spots, the UN relies heavily on specialized external organizations.

[3:13] Groups like the Global Partnership for Education injected over \$500 million in emergency relief to sustain learning for children without electricity or internet access. Measurement bodies like the OECD provided critical data sets, confirming that students with strong teacher access scored higher, while those distracted by digital devices saw their performance drop. This schematic illustrates the findings of Human Rights Watch, which discovered that 89% of government-recommended education apps were capable of monitoring children and transmitting their data to advertising companies. The United Nations cannot close the global education gap alone. It depends on this external ecosystem to provide capital, measure actual learning outcomes, and protect human rights.

[3:59] Moving forward, policymakers face a clear checklist of structural vulnerabilities that require immediate legislative action. First, establishing a standing emergency education fund ensures capital is ready before the next disruption, preventing the scramble to raise money after schools have already closed. Second, member states must adopt strict, localized learning recovery plans and enact specific child data privacy laws to govern educational software. Finally, these policies must acknowledge that effective education is inherently a human endeavor. The mandate for future resolutions is to draft protections that prioritize trained teachers and tested evidence over raw technological expansion.

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