

UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM) 2017-2018 Annual Reports

In 2017, UNACOM focused on cascading and communicating priority programmes of UNESCO. The team and selected or nominated Philippine delegates actively participated in and contributed to local and international fora, meetings and trainings that are aligned with the Commission's mandate.

In line with UNESCO's focus on gender, UNACOM successfully facilitated the completion of the project under the UNESCO Participation Programme (PP) that was implemented by the Philippine Social Science Council titled "Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Gender Sensitivity in Philippine Media." Project outcomes included a training module for continuing education of media professionals and a course pack for media, communication and related programs in tertiary education.

UNACOM also supported the PP project aligned with implementing the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication completed the project titled "Integration of the Safety of Journalists in the Curricula of Philippine Journalism Schools". Under this project, modules were developed and presented to national education agencies for mainstreaming at the tertiary level.

UNACOM was part of the Philippine delegation to the 41st Session of the World Heritage Committee and facilitated Experts Review of Nomination Dossiers and State of Conservation Reports to the World Heritage Session that was held in Krakow, Poland from 2 to 12 July 2017. It also supported the 12th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Jeju Island, Korea from 4 to 9 December 2017. Experts were also tapped to review nomination dossiers.

In support of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) and as a jump-off point for raising awareness on the importance of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNACOM assisted Philippine cities in their bids to be part of the UCCN. Last 31 October 2017, Baguio City successfully became the first Philippine city to be designated as a UNESCO Creative City under the category Crafts and Folk Arts.

UNACOM facilitated the implementation of one of the projects under UNESCO's Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Programme titled "Valorizing Research and Evidence on Inclusive Social Development to Achieve the SDGs in the Philippines" -- a welcome initiative that puts greater emphasis on the role of research in policy- and decision-making. This inter-agency project, led by the University of the Philippines - Center for Integrative Studies, will be completed by March 2018.

On International Oceanographic Commission (IOC) matters, UNACOM revitalized the National Committee on Marine Sciences (NCMS) as the focal body that would mainly serve as the clearinghouse on all matters pertaining to UNESCO-IOC. In support of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Network, UNACOM established the Philippine Network of Biosphere Reserves. The network will serve as platform for sharing one BR's best practices and providing assistance to another BR or a potential BR if needed, especially in the preparation of existing BR's updated action plan and potential BR's nomination dossiers.

Under the leadership of Secretary General Lila Ramos Shahani, a new website (<http://www.unesco.gov.ph>) was launched to strengthen UNACOM's web presence and to vigorously promote UNESCO programs and projects, as well as the initiatives and partnerships forged by UNACOM in line with its mandate.

UNACOM's banner programme for 2017 was the **Regional Conference on Inclusive and Rights-Based Education**. On 4-6 October 2017, the UNACOM initiated the regional conference, in cooperation with the Department of Education . The Conference brought together representatives from Ministries of Education of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines, representatives of UNESCO National Commissions and UNESCO headquarters, as well as specialist and experts, to share insights and practices in ensuring inclusive education. Among the outcomes are the recommendations to improve indicators for SDG target 4.5, as well as possible entry points for integrating human rights in education in terms of content and pedagogies.

The Conference highlighted the importance of fostering dialogue on policies in the Asia-Pacific and its existing education programs to determine what blocks sustainable development and what insights can be gained in expanding access to quality education, mainstreaming gender equality, designing a culturally appropriate and responsive curriculum for indigenous peoples, mainstreaming human rights into educational content and teaching methods, and peace-building in conflict zones. One of its key findings is the need to collect accurate data on all identified marginalized and at risk populations on a regular basis to prevent certain segments from falling through the cracks and enable governments to adequately assess the distinct needs of each vulnerable group, determine resource requirements, and make appropriate policy and program decisions. With the support of UNESCO, UNACOM disseminated a publication entitled: "In Pursuit of Inclusive Education in Southeast Asia: Programs and Challenges.

2018 was the year where UNACOM and its partners significantly benefitted from the trainings, networking, and pro-active coordination initiated in previous years. Through stronger and more meaningful partnerships, highly collaborative and relevant programmes, projects and activities were implemented.

UNACOM provides invaluable service by strengthening the soft power already being wielded by the DFA; catalyzes local, national, regional and international linkages and initiatives; preserves nation's heritage for generations to come; and promotes the nation's role in the betterment of human life and its environment.

Despite institutional challenges, such as the lean staff complement for an Office with evolved and expanded functions, UNACOM took great leaps while ensuring that it adhered to its mission:

- a) To serve as a consultative and liaison body that would bridge the work and programs of the Philippine government with UNESCO's own work in education, the sciences, culture and communication and
- b) To ensure that UNESCO's mandates and programmes are promoted and implemented in the Philippines through close partnerships or projects at the national and local levels, with the UNESCO Secretariat at the Headquarters and in the field, and other national commissions.

The Commission was very active not just in regional meetings of National Commissions but also in facilitating coordination between NatComs and potential partners in the Philippines.

As Philippine Representative to the 5th Inter-Regional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO, Diani, Kenya, June 19-21, 2018, UNACOM Secretary General was able to contribute inputs that led to another significant contribution through her presentation of the Practical Guidelines for Reforming UNESCO National Commissions during the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO, Gyeong-ju, Republic of Korea in September 2018.

In line with strengthening the collaboration and cooperation with partner institutions, the German Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with UNACOM, Leuphana University of Lüneberg, and BASF Stiftung, launched the Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) Programme in the Philippines with Bicol University (BU) as the pioneering institution. Two hundred students, trainers/faculty, and several officials of BU together with officials from the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), UNACOM, the German Commission for UNESCO and the Provincial Government of Albay took part in the programme launch in November 2018. This will run from 2018 to 2020 with the goal of equipping university students in multi-disciplinary backgrounds with the relevant entrepreneurial and soft skills to effectively set up and manage businesses in their respective communities and increase their employability.

In cooperation with the UNESCO-International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP), UNACOM and the Philippine Department of Education organized a Policy Forum on using Open School Data to Improve Transparency and Accountability in Education in January 2018.

In partnership with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO-INNOTECH), UNESCO Bangkok, Department of Education, and Philippine Normal University, two legs of the *Competency-Based Teacher Training in ICT-Pedagogy* were implemented in the Philippines (Manila and Cebu) benefitting 100 teachers/trainors.

As a member of the Asia-Pacific Network on Global Citizenship Education (GCED), UNACOM partnered with DepEd and the Philippine Normal University in organizing “The Whole-School Approach to Global Citizenship Education.” The three-day seminar-workshop last December 2018 was attended by school heads and teachers from select schools all over the Philippines to understand the basic concepts, principles, and competencies of GCED and to come up with recommendations on how to effectively integrate GCED in formal, informal and non-formal curricula. The seminar was used as a venue to cascade some updates and new knowledge on the subject, which had been presented during the “3rd International Conference on Global Citizenship Education: Platform on Pedagogy and Practice,” Seoul, Republic of Korea, September 2018. Since GCED is part of SDG Target 4.7, UNACOM will organize a Technical Working Group, which will be tasked to create a national definition of GCED and consequently identify measurable indicators.

UNACOM, together with the lead, National Association of UNESCO Clubs of the Philippines (NAUCP) and other partners, organized the 2018 International Assembly of Youth and Educators for UNESCO. In line with UNESCO’s mandate on youth participation, the National Commission continues to highlight the youth sector’s potential to contribute to achieving peace by initiating and supporting projects that empower them. These include projects and activities of NAUCP. To help shape future partnerships and collaborations, UNACOM required NAUCP to submit an Impact Assessment Report and consolidated accomplishment reports. UNACOM is the accrediting body for organizations who wish to be recognized as UNESCO Clubs under the NAUCP.

Strengthening the presence of Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet) is a work in progress as UNACOM continues to validate the membership and interest of Philippine schools to represent ASPNet in international fora.

Through the fund support of UNESCO Jakarta, UNACOM pushed for the initiative called “Valorizing Research and Evidence for Social Inclusion to Achieve the SDGs in the Philippines: Addressing the Shortage of Primary Care in the Philippines”, through the Center for Integrative Development (CIDS) at the University of the Philippines, Manila. As an offshoot of the this collaboration, UP CIDS submitted a proposal for the UNESCO Participation Programme entitled “Knowledge Mobilization and Intercultural Dialogue Promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Pastolan and Magbukun Aeta Villages in Bataan, Philippines,” that was approved by UNESCO, through the facilitation of UNACOM, in December 2018. The PP is expected to be completed in 2019.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), in partnership with UNACOM, assisted the Subanen community in Zamboanga Peninsula during the submission of the nomination bid of the Buklog to the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding List of UNESCO in 2018. The Intergovernmental Committee on ICH is expected to deliberate on the Buklog during their 14th Session in December 2019. UNACOM will continue to collaborate with NCCA and other partners in providing assistance to communities and proponents who wish to nominate their potential WH sites and ICH to the various UNESCO lists. Also in 2018, UNACOM joined UP-Visayas in the International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Iloilo City to convey UNESCO Directions for Safeguarding ICH in the Philippines.

UNACOM, together with a team from the Vigan City World Heritage Site (led by the local chief executive) and NCCA, participated in the meeting in Penang, Malaysia in October 1998 for the pilot project on “Linking World Heritage sites, Museums, Local Heritage and Creative Assets,” rolled out by UNESCO Jakarta with funding from the Japanese Government. The selected target sites for the project are Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca (Malaysia) and Historic Town of Vigan (the Philippines).

Under UNESCO’s Memory of the World (MOW) programme, the Culion Leprosy Archives in Palawan were inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Register during its Eight General Meeting in Gwangju, Republic of Korea on 30 May 2018. Housed at the Culion Museum and Archives in Palawan, the Culion Leprosy Archives boast of a wide collection of rare journals and reference materials on leprosy, as well as clinical records and letters of the island’s residents since 1906. The Culion Leprosy Archives garnered a majority vote from the 28-member MOWCAP after having been strongly recommended by the MOWCAP Register Sub-Committee for inscription. Dr. Arturo Cunanan, Chief, Culion Sanitarium and General Hospital (CSGH), spearheaded the nomination of the Archives, with the support of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and the facilitation of UNACOM.

UNACOM also played a crucial part in the Cinema Documentary Heritage Conference, Asia-Pacific Center for Cinema, that was held in Manila in October 2018 where around 100 Film conservationists, researchers, directors, lecturers, and vintage film lovers from Asia and the Pacific region gathered in the conference that helped raise more awareness of film as precious yet fragile documentary heritage of humanity and helped identify more audiovisual heritage from the Asia and the Pacific that can be considered for Memory of the World Register. The conference was made possible with the support of different partners including the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO, Network for Promotion of Asian and Asia-Pacific Cinema (NETPAC), Asia Culture Center, and the Film Institute of the University of the Philippines.

The Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) proved to be a consistent and pro-active partner of UNACOM in providing platforms for significant exchange regarding Safety of Journalists. It may be noted that “promoting the safety of journalists and combatting impunity for those who attack them are central elements within UNESCO’s support for press freedom on all media platforms.” In February 2018, AIJC and UNACOM jointly conducted the *Forum on Integrating Safety of Journalists in the Curricula of Journalism Schools* while the first national multi-stakeholder consultation on the crafting of a Philippine plan of action on journalist safety was held on 7 November where more than 80 representatives from 48 civil society, research agencies, media organizations and government institutions, indicating broad support for solving the challenge of safety of journalists.

Furthermore, UNACOM initiated the promotion and cascading of major UNESCO programmes, including those that promote lifelong learning, through the following:

- *Forum on Filipino Youth and Violent Extremism in the Digital Age*

UNESCO has adopted the Decision 197EX/46 to enhance the Organization’s capacity to provide assistance to member states in developing strategies to prevent violent extremism. To support this, UNACOM organized a two-day forum entitled “Filipino Youth & Violent Extremism in the Digital Age” that engaged the youth in the on-going discourse about the extent of their vulnerability from radical or extremist ideas. Questions on how the existing national and global political and socio-economic configuration has intensified conflict between class, religion and ethnic groups, on how the internet and social media are used as platform to spread extremist and radical ideas, as well as innovative approaches to combat violent extremism were tackled in the event hosted by UNACOM in July 2018. Around 50 Filipino youth actively participated in this forum. Highlights of the event were shared with partner agencies including DFA, DepEd and the National Youth Commission.

- *Workshops and Meetings for the UNESCO World Heritage Bid of Mt. Mayon National Park in Albay and Mt. Mantalingahan in Palawan*

UNACOM assisted the World Heritage nomination bids of Mount Mayon National Park (MMNP), formerly Mayon Volcano National Park (MVNP), and Mount Mantalingahan Protected Landscape (MMPL). Both sites have signified their intent to strengthen their nomination dossiers and submit them to the World Heritage Centre in February 2020. UNACOM continues to provide guidance to both sites in terms of compliance with the Operational Guidelines of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

- *UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Manila, 29 June 2018.*

UNACOM hosted an inter-agency workshop on the 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. UNESCO expert, Ms. Anupama Sekhar, was invited for a lecture to the country team. Many other partners from the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Intellectual Property Office (IPO Phil), Design Center of the Philippines (DCP), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), British Council, and DFA-UNIO, joined the workshop. One of the recommendations from the workshop was for NEDA, as the primary agency that puts together goals and targets under one Philippine Development Plan, to work on the policy side together with NCCA and DTI who can both be focal points for the 2005 Convention.

- *Preparation and coordination for the Hosting of the IOC-Western Pacific (WESTPAC) Intergovernmental Session in 2019.*

One of 2018's milestones is the UNESCO decision to hold the 2019 IOC WESTPAC Session in the Philippines. DFA and UNACOM jointly lobbied to ensure that funds, in the amount of around P2.3 million will be available for the international event. The National Committee on Marine Sciences (NCMS) - International Oceanographic Commission (IOC), of which UNACOM is secretariat, took part in coordinating with key agencies and participated in the IOC-WESTPAC technical meeting hosted by the Philippines in September 2018. A dedicated website has also been initiated which is expected to be launched in 2019 upon completion of inputs from members of NCMS.

- *Support to the Man and Biosphere Programme.*

In line with the agreements during the Lima (Peru) Action Planning for Biosphere Reserves, UNACOM provided resource speakers for the Sustainable Management Planning for the Albay Biosphere Reserve in May 2018. This was a joint initiative with the Provincial Government of Albay and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The updated management plan shall be the basis for prioritization of programmes and projects in the Albay BR.

UNACOM also supported the updating of promotional materials of the existing BRs in the Philippines and ensured coordination and cooperation with regional offices and the International BR network. At the local level, the Philippine BR Network initiated the conceptual design for its information and education campaign both online and through strategic linkages.

- *Volunteers under the Naturweit/Kulturweit Programme of the German Federal Office and the German Commission for UNESCO.*

As part of UNACOM's and German Commission for UNESCO's mutual agreement for Philippines to be among the pioneer countries for the German Volunteers Programme, UNACOM and focal persons from the Philippine BRs participated in the "International conference on youth volunteering in and cooperation among UNESCO designated sites" in Berlin, Germany last December 2018. Starting 2019, the German Programme will bring in to host countries around three to four volunteers in their selected BR sites for a duration of six months to a year. This is aligned with UNACOM's commitment for stronger and deeper cooperation and collaboration with other National Commissions.

- *Support to the bid of Bohol as the pioneer Geopark in the Philippines.*

For the past years, UNACOM has been at the forefront of encouraging, supporting, and empowering bodies and government units/institutions that push nomination of potential sites. Among the contenders for the UNESCO Global Geoparks inscription is the Bohol Province that pro-actively worked on the nomination dossier (together with its partners that include the University of the Philippines-School of Urban and Regional Planning) required to be part of the UNESCO Global. UNACOM facilitated meeting, conducted coordination and field visits as well as review of documents in 2018. Documents have already been submitted to UNESCO, which is expected to give feedback on the dossier in 2019.

- *Strategic meetings of the National Committee on Marine Sciences (NCMS).*

UNACOM gathered key agencies for marine science and UNESCO Oceanographic concerns to discuss relevant matters such as crafting a Philippine Ocean Science Report as an input to UNESCO report and participation to IOC Executive Council Meetings, IOC-WESTPAC Advisory Committee Meetings, and other IOC-related meetings. These agencies include the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), DENR- Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute (MSI), Department of Foreign Affairs – Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office (DFA-MOAO), National Museum (NM), Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAG-ASA), Philippine Coast GUARD (PCG), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), and Philippine Navy. Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Undersecretary and UNACOM Commissioner Renato Solidum is the NCMS Chairperson with UP-MSI as the Vice-Chair. In 2018, development of a dedicated website for NCMS was initiated. A Philippine proposal for a Regional Training Research Center (RTRC) was submitted to IOC-WESTPAC, with focus on the areas where the Philippines has an edge like coral reefs and marine protected areas. Subsequently, it can offer training courses on some other areas. UP MSI identified-laboratories can be used as facilities.