

Report on:

Making a Difference: Seventy Years of UNESCO Actions

UNESCO Anniversary Conference, UNESCO, 125 Avenue de Suffren, Paris, 28-29 October 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

UNESCO's seventieth anniversary conference "Making a Difference: Seventy Years of UNESCO Actions" was convened by UNESCO Archives and the international research project "Routes of Knowledge: The Global History of UNESCO (1945-1975)". The conference was headed by Professor Poul Duedahl from Aalborg University in Denmark, was supported by the Danish National Commission for UNESCO and was held in the meeting room of the Executive Board (Room X) at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. During the two-day conference, some 200 participants gathered to listen to and discuss the 15 papers comprising the forthcoming publication *A History of UNESCO: Global Actions and Impacts* (Palgrave Macmillan, February 2016), edited by Professor Duedahl. Apart from the invited researchers, a number of speakers connected to UNESCO addressed selected topics.

The conference revolved around the notion of the intended and unintended historical impact of UNESCO actions in selected member states in specific case studies. The topics discussed in the case studies covered a range of important areas in which UNESCO has been involved. They included world heritage, education, international understanding and the post-war reconstruction of international relations. The conference was divided into five subthemes under the following headings: 1) *Routes of Knowledge* 2) *Rebuilding a World Devastated by War* 3) *Experts on the Ground* 4) *Implementing Peace in the Minds* 5) *Practicing World Heritage*. Furthermore, Professor Elikia M'Bokolo gave a keynote speech, and former UNESCO Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow contributed a personal account.

The conference was opened by Deputy Director-General Mr. Getachew Engida, Chairperson of the Executive Board Mr. Mohamed Sameh Amr, President of UNESCO's General Conference Mr. Hao Ping and Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark, Protector of the Danish National Commission for UNESCO.

Day 1:

Opening Ceremony:

Deputy Director-General Mr. Getachew Engida gave the assembly a warm welcome, noting the the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark was an honor for UNESCO and the conference. Mr. Getachew Engida emphasized that one of the ways in which UNESCO had played a significant role throughout its history was as a 'house of ideas'. He explained that UNESCO has always been, and continues to be, a laboratory of ideas aimed at the defense of human dignity. Recalling the spirit of the founders of UNESCO, who had proposed new visions of peace and international

understanding in a war-devastated world, he reminded the assembly that the need for such visions and mutual understanding had not diminished seventy years later.

Chairperson of the Executive Board Mohamed Sameh Amr continued in a similar vein, stating that UNESCO was a “house of all people and all cultures” and that the conference room, the meeting room of the Executive Board of UNESCO, represented a place for dialogue. Its arrangement with a round table invited all to share their thoughts and opinions equally. Mohamed Sameh Amr proposed that the conference should not only be used to emphasize the past accomplishments of UNESCO but also to look forward to see what UNESCO could do in the future. Quoting the Chilean poet, Nobel Prize winner and former member of the Executive Board Pablo Neruda, Mohamed Sameh Amr highlighted the role played by UNESCO as a representative of universal culture, and he reminded the assembly that although the world had changed significantly since the creation of UNESCO seventy years earlier, the noble objectives of its constitution remained the same.

President of the UNESCO General Conference Mr. Hao Ping continued by reflecting on three historical landmark dates for ‘the routes of knowledge’: 7000 years ago, 700 years ago and 70 years ago. 7000 years ago, Mr. Hao Ping argued, the first village and the first civilization came into being, initiating the first attempts to share knowledge and culture among peoples and civilizations. After gradual progress, this matured into a steady flow of knowledge and cultural exchange following the expansion of commercial routes 700 years ago. However, stated Mr. Hao Ping, it was not until 70 years ago that the world saw its first professional and international organization advocating cultural diversity and practicing knowledge sharing. Concluding that knowledge is the key to human development and that knowledge sharing is fundamental to this development, Hao Ping called for more contributions to this enterprise.

Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark described the foundation of UNESCO and its mission to promote international peace and the common welfare of mankind. She reminded the assembly that the translation of this mission into concerted action remains the shared responsibility of member states of UNESCO. The Princess applauded the wisdom of UNESCO’s founding fathers in their identification of the need to involve and inspire ordinary global citizens and to invite them to take part in UNESCO’s efforts. She highlighted the important role played by the national commissions in promoting this vision of participation and inspiration. In conclusion, Her Royal Highness Princess Marie underlined the importance of a history of the impact of UNESCO, which can transfer valuable knowledge and provide orientation for future UNESCO actions.

Introduction:

Professor Poul Duedahl (Aalborg University, Denmark): Out of the House: On the Global History of UNESCO, 1945-2015:

Professor Duedahl explained the rationale underlying the conference theme, the intended and unintended historical impact of UNESCO, which also constitutes the core of the research agenda behind the Global History of UNESCO project in general. Professor Duedahl explained that the idea for this specific research agenda came from UNESCO History Project discussions following the UNESCO Anniversary Conference in 2005. These discussions had highlighted the limitations of intellectual history approaches to the history of UNESCO. The new turn in the research agenda moves the analytical focus from the birth of ideas and initiatives at UNESCO House in Paris to the way in which

they travel “out of the house” and to the impact they have at the regional and local level in member states. Professor Duedahl also invited critical examination of the degree to which UNESCO initiatives have historically reflected contemporary ideas and trends and of the degree to which UNESCO has invented new ideas. He called for a de-centralized way of investigating, as the impact of UNESCO is perhaps best understood by examining it in national contexts.

Sub-theme: Routes of Knowledge

Papers presented:

Edgardo C. Krebs (Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA): Popularizing Anthropology, Combating Racism: Alfred Métraux at the UNESCO Courier

Céline Giton (Chartreuse de Neuville, France): Weapons of Mass Distribution: UNESCO and the Central Role of Books

Suzanne Langlois (York University, Toronto, Canada): And Action!: UN and UNESCO Coordinating Information Films, 1945-1951.

The exploration of the first sub-theme undertook various investigations of the ways in which and the means by which UNESCO has sought to disseminate knowledge and ideas around the world. The discussions highlighted the importance of individuals such as Alfred Métraux and of specific channels of distribution, such as the UNESCO Courier and UNESCO information films. More ideological views regarding books in general were also emphasized. The session explored UNESCO’s views on books (and a worldwide book policy) as “the cultural and intellectual basis of development.” To a certain degree, the US regarded the UNESCO initiatives as partly competing with their own. However, the conflicts between UNESCO and certain member states were not only ‘external’. There were also internal conflicts in UNESCO, not least regarding the concept of *culture* and the relation between culture and science, which is especially apparent in the analysis of the UNESCO Courier. The case of UNESCO information films also illustrates the tensions between the UN and its specialized agencies. There were multiple difficulties in coordination between New York (headquarters of the UN film board) and UNESCO headquarters in Paris, so although UNESCO was well aware of the need for visual aids, especially for education in a world in which 40-45% of the population was still illiterate, it was to be a slow start for UNESCO engagement in this area. Cold war polarization came to play an important role in all these endeavors, increasing the general attention paid to ideological propaganda in the publication and dissemination activities of UNESCO. The distribution of information became a still more controversial topic as the ideological views of UNESCO were spread to areas of the world which did not share these views, as was the case in the distribution in South Africa of UNESCO publications on race.

In the discussion, it became evident that UNESCO had been willing to take certain risks in both making and distributing information films. UNESCO would often focus on the technical means of distributing and projecting films in member states and thus circumvent discussion of the actual information disseminated on topics such as human rights and race. During the conference, what would later become the recurrent theme of critical reflections on UNESCO actions was raised for the first time:

“Are there no skeletons in the cupboard?” as it was phrased in the discussion. This gave rise to an interesting debate, which addressed several critical aspects of UNESCO actions (or lack of action). These included the downplaying of women rights in the early years of UNESCO due to political-strategic considerations and the political controversies related to the US screening of American employees in UNESCO, as described in Julian Behrstock’s *The Eighth Case*. In addition, the question of analyzing failures was raised. This theme was taken up for discussion again after the presentations of the third sub-theme.

Sub-theme: Rebuilding a World Devastated by War

Papers presented:

Samuel Boussion (Université Paris-8, France), Mathias Gardet (Université Paris-8, France) & Martine Ruchat (Université de Genève, Switzerland): Child Victims, UNESCO and the Promotion of an International Model of Children’s Communities after World War II:

Takashi Saikawa (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Tokyo, Japan): Returning to the International Community: UNESCO and Postwar Japan, 1945-1951

Miriam Intrator (Ohio University Libraries, USA): Pursuing Peace through a ‘Library-Minded’ World

The second sub-theme approached the role and actions of UNESCO in rebuilding the world, both in terms of infrastructure and mentality, following the massive destruction caused by World War II. Three papers were presented examining very different aspects of the subject and thus indicating the vast scope of UNESCO-involvement. A central theme of all the papers was that the world community and UNESCO had been facing the problem of material destruction: teaching and educational institutions such as schools and libraries had been destroyed during the war. On the premise that education was a central means of promoting international understanding and peace, UNESCO undertook the challenge of facilitating efforts to rebuild educational institutions. The session showed that the rebuilding efforts were approached in different ways and with a variety of methodologies. There were long term programs, such as the focus on promoting public libraries, which promoted internationalization through the inclusion of book material in other languages than French and English. More experimental programs showed how UNESCO had adopted aspects of psychology and pedagogy. For instance, in the village in Trogen, children participated in creating a community based on understanding and democracy. These two specific cases showed that UNESCO efforts were both local and national. Furthermore, it was evident that UNESCO wanted to create a mental framework for peace through educational means, thereby mending psychological as well as physical damage left by the war. The Japanese case was different from the two other papers presented, in that it explored national interests in UNESCO. This showed that acceptance of the UNESCO initiatives was not necessarily adopted because of the ideological framework of UNESCO: it served rather as a gateway into the larger international community.

The first part of the discussion was concerned with the question of the UNESCO mandate in reconstruction. It became clear that from very early on, UNESCO saw itself as participating in the

reconstruction of the world, arguing that aspects such as education were vital needs of humankind. There was, however, the problem of economics and the funding of the UNESCO programs. It was argued that in the early years, UNESCO perceived itself as an advising and coordinating body of the UN, thereby minimizing the economic involvement of the member states.

The second issue discussed specifically concerned the Trogen case and whether the experimental form of pedagogy employed by UNESCO was in agreement or in conflict with the general consensus of the day. It was argued that the pedagogy and psychology of war trauma was a relatively new subject of scientific interest in the early post-war years. The pedagogy employed by UNESCO was therefore both in agreement and in conflict with the consensus. It was furthermore made clear that apart from Trogen, the concept of child communities was short lived and met complications related to the Cold War. Trogen can therefore be interpreted as an ideological statement rather than as a pedagogical movement.

The third and last topic of discussion concerned the direct implications of UNESCO involvement in Japan. It was suggested that the impact of UNESCO on Japanese society began to decline as early as 1948. As a result, the first years of UNESCO involvement in Japan produced single contributions such as war memorials rather than a deeper understanding of the scientific and educational programs .

Sub-theme: Experts on the Ground

Papers presented:

Jens Boel (UNESCO Archives, France): UNESCO's Fundamental Education Program 1946-1958: Vision, Actions and Impact

Josué Mikobi Dikay (Université de Kinshasa, D.R. Congo): Education for Independence: UNESCO in post-colonial Congo (not present)

Anabella Abarzúa Cutroni (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina): The flow of UNESCO experts towards Latin America: On the asymmetrical impact of the missions, 1947-1984

Discussions of the third sub-theme explored the distribution and work of UNESCO experts in different settings. In the first presentation, this involved an analysis of the UNESCO flagship program 'Fundamental Education'. The history of the program was laid out to explore its characteristic features, especially the orientation of the program to conveying practical knowledge and skills and not just to combating illiteracy. The UN later wanted to delimit the scope of the program and reframe it as only a part of what was called 'community building'. The investigation demonstrated how a pilot project was first set up in Haiti and later in several other countries. It also revealed the significant involvement of national governments in the project, for example, in the case of Indonesia. Centers were established in Mexico and Egypt, while some 62 countries organized activities directly defined as "fundamental education". UNESCO cooperated with several other UN agencies, such as the WHO, FAO and ILO, and the presentation also showed that the cooperation between these different organizations was not always easy. The second presentation approached the theme of mission experts on a more quantitative level, mapping the asymmetric pattern of deployment of UNESCO experts in South America 1947-

1984. The presentation showed that the level of development of the recipient countries may have had a significant influence on the numbers and types of experts each received.

During the discussion, questions were raised concerning the role of pedagogy in the Fundamental Education-program. Did UNESCO promote certain forms of pedagogy, did this involve new methods, and did they promote a functional understanding of the environment? The replies and further discussions made it clear that UNESCO did promote certain forms of pedagogy involving international experts such as Paulo Freire. However, it was also apparent that UNESCO experts' views on pedagogy often differed from the views of teachers in the nations concerned. Furthermore, the discussion revolved around the background, training, gender and methods of recruitment of UNESCO experts, as this had been a less prominent theme in the presentations. Finally, the discussion returned to the theme of critical perspectives. Should such a historical investigation into aspects of UNESCO impact not also include more critical aspects such as UNESCO failures? This again gave rise to an interesting debate, in which it was pointed out that the contributors did not see themselves as 'looking for success or failures'; rather, the point was to examine intended or unintended impact. What might seem to have been a "success" in one domain may very well have been a "failure" in another. Therefore, it makes little sense to speak in these terms. Furthermore, it was pointed out by the contributors that more often than not, the impact was not exclusively due to UNESCO actions. In fact it was often the result of cooperation between UNESCO and other international and national bodies. Two remarks were made regarding the proposed title of the anthology (*The History of UNESCO: Global Actions and Impacts*). The first concerned the singular form "The history" (This was later changed to "A history" followed by the same subtitle). The second remark concerned the fact that the title could seem to imply that the anthology would present a coherent history of UNESCO. As some contributors argued, this was not the case. Rather, the contributors had looked at different areas in which UNESCO had played a role, and then they had traced the intended or unintended impact of UNESCO actions within these specific fields.

DAY 2:

Keynote Speaker: Elikia M'Bokolo (École des hautes études en sciences sociales de Paris): Why History ? Reflections on the Relevance of the Historical Sciences for UNESCO's Activities

Mr M'Bokolo gave a speech informed by his background as a distinguished historian who has worked with UNESCO for many years and, in particular, has made a significant contribution to the monumental work, *The General History of Africa*.

In his address, Mr M'Bokolo explored how the early international order was constructed around international decisions, meetings and conferences and was characterised by a mixture of blindness, selfishness, traditionalism, and revivalism. These characteristics prevented the international order from making its mark on history in the long term. Mr M'Bokolo traced the principle of sharing land and men which had prevailed, in disregard and violation of the rights of peoples, in the division of Europe between its princes at the congress of Vienna in 1815, in the division of Africa between the European powers in Berlin some 70

years later, and in the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. He pointed out the historical denial of the historicity of the African continent that was promoted by the European powers in this period. In the European mind, the population of Africa became a strange conglomerate of 'indigenous people', lacking history and civilization and inhabiting the "terra nullius" that Africa was declared to be at the 1884 Berlin Conference. Thirty-five years later, the Treaty of Versailles may have proclaimed the "right of peoples to self-determination" in Europe, but it also transferred possession of the African territory previously occupied by Germany to the benefit of the victors of the Great War - without any regard for the inhabitants. This general 'denial of history' weakened the institutional innovations arising from the Treaty of Versailles and would eventually immerse the victorious powers in a great perplexity as to their fate. Brilliant intellectuals began therefore to rely on history, first and foremost in proclaiming the end of civilisation with references to its mortality (for example, Paul Valéry remarked, "We civilizations, we know now that we are mortal"). It was one of the strongest Pan-Africanists, C. L. R. James, who, with biting irony, mocked the inability of historians, thinkers and European intellectuals to explain how, in a single generation, their glorious history was able to produce the gigantic disasters of two world wars. UNESCO intended to break with precisely this design and practice of international relations and, at the same time, embrace the cultural and intellectual dynamics of Africa. The birth of UNESCO coincided with the process of decolonisation in Africa and around the world. Among both African and non-African intellectuals, there was a strong belief that, as Lumumba stated, "One day Africa will write its own history, unlike what they write in London and New York." However, the process actually started in Paris, under the auspices of UNESCO. *The General History of Africa* set out not only to be a factual history of Africa, but also a social history. The historians needed to de-colonise and de-westernise a range of concepts in order to be able to write a history of Africa. They had to rethink their theories to write a history of Africa, as well as their methods; now, for example, they would have to take the tradition of oral history seriously. These intellectual challenges and the way in which they were resolved in *The General History of Africa* paved the way for minority-history, women's history and other new approaches. The effects of this history initiative reached far beyond academia, however, and were clearly related to the unification of Africa. This unity was based on Africa's history, as one of the charters states. The history of Africa should also be seen as a world history. The legacies of slavery and global capitalism testify to this.

Personal account: Former Director-General of UNESCO Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow

In his intervention, Mr M'Bow recalled disagreements over the history of Africa that he had had with his professors as a young student of history at Sorbonne University in Paris because he already felt that the history of Africa needed to be retold. UNESCO gave him the opportunity, and Mr M'Bow participated in the history committee behind *The General History of Africa*. According to Mr M'Bow, UNESCO's engagement with history arose from the mandate to raise both the global level of public education and general living standards. This dual goal required mutual understanding among the nations of the world, which in turn required knowledge about their history. UNESCO therefore had to

pay special attention to the areas of the world about which nothing or little had been written. The East-West Mutual Understanding project (1957-1966) headed by UNESCO included no mention of Africa, and *The History of Humanity* only contained scattered references to African history. In other words, that history needed to be written and curricula to be changed so that teachers in Africa no longer had to teach history using European textbooks in which the children could read that their ancestors were the Gauls. The committee behind *The General History of Africa* wanted to write a neutral history and invited both African and non-African specialists from Europe and the US to join the work.

Asked about the impact of *The General History of Africa* in Africa itself, M'Bow explained that several surveys had been conducted into precisely that question, and they invariably showed that teachers in Africa generally were aware of the book but rarely used it. This was mainly because it was not available to them. UNESCO has since tried to publish simpler and cheaper versions of the book, but with limited success. Teacher training colleges often only have a single copy of the book, so resources are certainly a problem. However, current cooperation with the BBC and web based initiatives may soon help to make the book more available. According to Mr M'Bow, the next challenge is to make the necessary revisions to the book – a job for future historians.

Sub-theme: Implementing Peace in the Minds

Papers presented:

Thomas Nygren (Uppsala University, Sweden): UNESCO Teaches History: Implementing International Understanding in Sweden

Inés Dussel (Departamento de Investigaciones Educativas del Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados, Mexico) & Christian Ydesen (Aalborg University, Denmark): UNESCO and the Improvement of History Textbooks in Mexico, 1945-1960

Aigul Kulnazarova (Tama University, Japan): UNESCO's Role in East Asian Reconciliation: Postwar Japan and International Understanding

The papers presented as contributions to this sub-theme explored the implementation and possible impact of UNESCO initiatives under the framework of the International Understanding program. Nygren's case study of the impact of UNESCO on history teaching in Sweden centered on an interesting analysis of changes in national curriculum and of the selection of topics by students writing historical essays. The presentation revealed that in the first stages (and following the discourse of The League of Nations), the Swedish curriculum focused strongly on national history. This changed after the Second World War, when a distinct global history current made its way into the curriculum, emphasizing unity in diversity (much in line with UNESCO text book revision guidelines). From 1994 onwards, however, the trend shifted again to a stronger focus on the European community, a direction more akin to the recommendations of the Council of Europe.

Inés Dussel and Christian Ydesen's paper investigated the conflicting views expressed in the encounter between the UNESCO text book revision tradition and the tradition of text book revision in Mexico. In

order to show the kind of spaces within which UNESCO may be said to have had an impact, the paper identified the relevant networks and actors within both traditions and shed light on the encounter between these two historical formations. Dussel and Ydesen found that 'Mexico was no newcomer to the field of using textbook revisions as a means to promote international understanding'. There was no one-way flow of information and guidelines from Paris to Mexico; many transfers and borrowings also reversed the flow. The fact that UNESCO drew on the expertise provided by historians such as Zavala and Villegas testifies to this point. In her presentation on *UNESCO's Role in East Asian Reconciliation*, Kulnazarova explored the ways in which UNESCO contributed to the improvement of history text books and to regional reconciliation between Japan and South Korea. Despite Japan's eagerness to conform to UNESCO guidelines, she concluded that the impact of UNESCO in this field was limited. Both internal Japanese forces and the external force of pressure from the neighboring countries affected the content of Japanese history education for decades. The text books remained ambiguous and partial.

In the discussions, the topic of teachers training came up. While all the contributors considered it relevant to look at teacher training in relation to the implementation of UNESCO text book revision guidelines (or lack of same), they also defended the relevance of examining the official history told in history text books. Attention was also drawn to the text book revision meetings between historians from Germany and France in 1955 and Germany and Poland in 1974. These are covered in a forthcoming anthology edited by Christian Ydesen and Aigul Kulnazarova. A question was raised regarding whether or not teachers' guides were produced in connection with the text book revision meetings. None of the papers deal with this specific aspect, but Mr M'Bow could confirm that such guidelines had been written.

Sub-theme : Practicing World Heritage

Papers presented:

Aurélie Elisa Gfeller (The Graduate Institute, Switzerland) & Jaci Eisenberg (The Graduate Institute, Switzerland): UNESCO and the Shaping of Global Heritage

Agnès Borde Meyer (Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne, France): Safeguarding Iran and Afghanistan: On UNESCO's Efforts in the Field of Archeology

Celine Lai (Chinese University of Hong Kong, P.R. China): UNESCO and Chinese Heritage: An Ongoing Campaign to Achieve World-Class Standard

The fifth and final sub-theme presented at the conference explored world heritage and how it became a global field of operation for UNESCO. It was made clear that the World Heritage convention of 1972 created one of the most widespread and easily recognizable programmes in the history of UNESCO. The scope of this program extended from professional interventions to the preservation and relocation of monuments. This meant that impact from the convention could be felt and interpreted in a variety of ways. All the papers presented emphasised that the concept and implementation of World Heritage had both positive and negative consequences. Generally it was found that the strengthening of local and national tourist economies could be interpreted as a positive impact of the convention.

Furthermore, as the Afghan and Iranian cases show, the concept of World Heritage positively affected the discipline of archaeology and helped the flow and counterflow of professionals in the field of preservation and presentation. However, there were conflicts over the definition of World Heritage. As the Chinese case indicates, the UNESCO brand of World Heritage was not necessarily readily adopted by the member states. Moreover, it was argued that UNESCO efforts seemed to be concentrated in Asia and Africa. European heritage did not receive the same kind of attention. Furthermore, all three papers argued that the World Heritage programme helped to strengthen the very nationalism to which UNESCO ideology was opposed. Finally it was argued that the World Heritage programme did not necessarily take into account local interpretations and rites surrounding cultural heritage. Inclusion on the World Heritage list could for example undermine local rituals and culture due to tourism.

The discussion of various aspects of this sub-theme began with a clarification of the conventions concerning World Heritage. It was made clear that the convention of 1972 was not the only convention actually used to deal with the question of World Heritage, but it served as a framework for UNESCO's involvement. Other UNESCO programmes and national institutions were instrumental in realizing the goals of UNESCO. A central question raised concerned the interpretation of UNESCO conventions dealing with World Heritage. Mechtild Rössler, director of the Division for Heritage and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, noted that while the conventions as such were static, interpretation of them were capable of changing. Therefore, it was argued that investigations of the World Heritage programme should take deviations from the original convention guidelines into account. A further criticism was that the papers in general did not consider natural heritage, but solely focused on cultural heritage. Two main arguments were presented defending the focus on cultural heritage. First of all, there was the practical problem of scientific limitation. Secondly, there seemed to be a limited interaction between cultural and natural heritage programs, where the World Heritage convention seemed to be an exception. This particular discussion revealed that the archival material did not necessarily record personal and professional experience on the ground, a recurring feature that had been noted throughout the conference. It was argued that in this particular case, there had indeed been clear connections between the different sub-programmes concerning heritage. The counterargument was that this had not been taken into consideration simply because it was not evident in the source material.

Closing remarks

After the last sub-theme had been presented and discussed, a few closing remarks were offered to wrap up and summarize the conference. Jens Boel thanked all of the participants and UNESCO-staff involved for their contributions. He added that the work of the conference reflected the fact that since the launch of the UNESCO History Project in 2005, research on the history of UNESCO had to some extent been mainstreamed (integrated into wider historical research). He also stated that the papers and discussions at the conference showed great potential for future research, in particular for impact studies and studies of interactions between the UN, UNESCO and other UN agencies. Professor Duedahl spoke next, briefly addressing a few themes discussed during the conference. He stated that the efforts of the conference should be viewed as the first steps in working with the concept of impact in a UNESCO context. He furthermore explained that this had led to a focus on the early period of UNESCO,

which was important in terms of determining impact. He concluded that part of the aim of the conference and the publication was to give researchers and scholars an approach to investigating UNESCO and other similar international organizations. Finally the chairperson of the Danish National Commission for UNESCO, Linda Nielsen, spoke briefly about the conference. She noted that the historical approach taken in the papers was both interesting and necessary. She furthermore underlined the importance of learning from the history of UNESCO. In conclusion, she made a plea to historians that they should actively try to improve UNESCO through their research and that such an approach should be considered for future studies.