

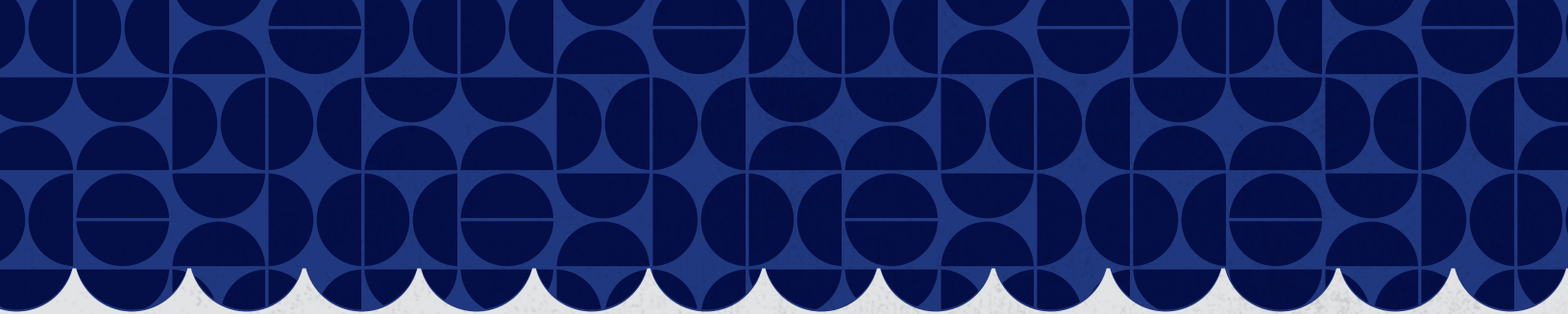
Connecting for a Better World

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES | 2020-21



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



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About the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was created in 1945 in the wake of the Second World War, and Canada was one of its 20 founding members. UNESCO champions equity, peace and sustainable development. The values of dialogue, knowledge-sharing and international cooperation in the fields of education, culture, communication, information and science are central to its mission.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—to be achieved by 2030—inform the work of UNESCO and the other UN agencies. They are designed to support the development of fairer and more inclusive communities as well as sustainability in education, ecosystems, cities, consumption and economies.

THE EXTENDED FAMILY OF UNESCO NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

To implement its ambitious mandate, UNESCO is supported by a global network of 199 national commissions in its member and associate-member countries. These act as bridges between UNESCO and its countries. The national commissions mobilize and coordinate partnerships with civil society to make substantial contributions toward achieving UNESCO's objectives.

CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Created in 1957, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) carries out the mandate and initiatives of UNESCO in Canada. Our members and partners come from all sectors across the country and include universities, non-governmental organizations, institutions, government departments and individuals. Together, with the support of a dynamic and independent Secretariat and the Commission's Executive Committee, our members and partners consult, research, and collaborate in UNESCO's mandated areas, ensuring that UNESCO's priorities take root in Canada and that Canadian perspectives are brought to global forums. We operate under the responsibility of the Canada Council for the Arts.



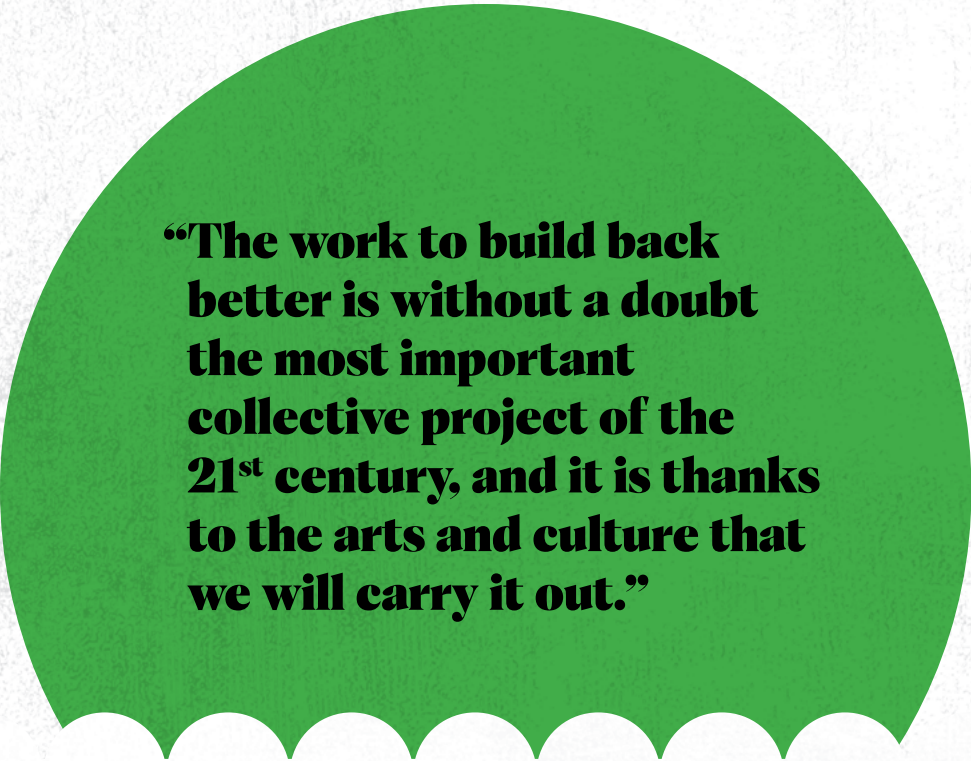
Simon Brault

Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts

Over the last year, the pandemic has impacted millions of people and shone a harsh light on the fragility and inequity of our systems and institutions, particularly with regards to Indigenous People, racialized people, people with lower incomes, and those who are marginalized. But the pandemic has also highlighted the power of collaboration—something we need to build back better for a just, equitable, sustainable, and inclusive world.

To build back better, sustainable development goals—namely those set out in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, which is championed by the CCUNESCO—are fundamental. This year, when developing its 2021–26 strategic plan, *Art, now more than ever*, the Canada Council for the Arts set strong directions so that the arts can play an inspiring, innovative, and exemplary role in our collective development. The directions were founded on the immense potential of the arts to foster social cohesion, community action, citizens' quality of life regardless of background or condition, and full participation in our collective development. The Council's directions are reflected in the work of the CCUNESCO Secretariat, in its priorities for equity, gender equality, reconciliation, and youth mobilization, as well as its networks' power of collaboration. Together, we must adhere to shared leadership and address common issues like decolonization, equity, social justice, and climate change. The Council values the synergy between its activities and those of the CCUNESCO.

I want to salute the work of the entire CCUNESCO Secretariat team, and especially that of Michelle Chawla, the Director General of Strategy, Public Affairs, and Arts Engagement at the Council and a member of the CCUNESCO's Executive Committee, who stepped in again as interim Secretary



“The work to build back better is without a doubt the most important collective project of the 21st century, and it is thanks to the arts and culture that we will carry it out.”

General. With her vast experience, she led a harmonious transition after an efficient interim period between Sébastien Goupil’s departure and Roda Muse’s arrival. I also want to mention the support of Executive Committee President Liette Vasseur and the illuminating presence of Executive Committee Vice-President Mireille Apollon.

I want to thank Sébastien Goupil for his remarkable work throughout his term. His dynamic energy and strategic intelligence helped increase the CCUNESCO’s visibility and Canada’s influence within UNESCO.

I am delighted to welcome Roda Muse as CCUNESCO Secretary General. With her considerable experience in cooperative and social innovation, the status of women, and official languages, Roda is a true builder of communities and networks. She is committed to the CCUNESCO continuing to play a major role in current societal issues, namely in addressing social inequities and gender-based violence. I cannot wait to see her influence contribute to building back better the just, equitable, sustainable, and inclusive world that I mentioned above.

I hope this report will inspire you and allow you to understand the importance of civic participation in the work of the CCUNESCO, which operates under the aegis of the Canada Council for the Arts. The work to build back better is without a doubt the most important collective project of the 21st century, and it is thanks to the arts and culture that we will carry it out.



Liette Vasseur

President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Surely 2020–21 will be remembered as one of the more momentous years in the Commission's history. Its backdrop, of course, was the global pandemic that disrupted our lives and many of our plans. It obliged our Secretariat, members and partners to rapidly adapt to work in very different ways.

Despite these challenges—and as you will glean from reading this report—CCUNESCO had a very productive and creative year.

I find it gratifying to take this moment and look back on the work of the Commission, particularly the role and contributions of the Secretariat. We are most fortunate to have such a dynamic and productive Secretariat team. I thank them for their efforts and unwavering dedication this past year.

Of course, our Commission experienced a major change with the departure of Sébastien Goupil, Secretary General, in February 2021. Sébastien made huge strides in building the visibility and credibility of the Commission. In addition, our long-serving programmes manager, Pauline Dugré, retired in May 2020. Both are much missed.

Choosing the most important achievements of the past year to highlight in this report was difficult, considering that so much was accomplished. However, we want to highlight the Commission's cross-cutting priorities, as well as open science and the decolonization of knowledge. These are areas where we are showing real leadership and contributing to global movements that hold the promise of tremendous positive impact. And when I say "we," it is because it is the joint efforts of all Secretariat members that make these accomplishments possible.



**“...we are showing
real leadership and
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As I reflect on what has been accomplished and what needs to be done in the near future, I recognize how important it is for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and its Secretariat and networks to continue sparking discussion and taking action for the betterment of our society and environment.

Canada is still reeling from the news of mass graves discovered on former residential school grounds. We are struck anew by the devastation in Indigenous communities caused by the break-up of families and the deliberate destruction of Indigenous culture and heritage. Our work with respect to Indigenous cultural heritage, particularly intangible heritage, is proving to be so important in this context.

Finally, I feel quite positive about the future of our Commission. The year 2020–21 marked the final year of the strategic plan that we launched in 2014–15, and the new strategic plan, approved last June, demonstrates our determination to maintain support for cross-cutting priorities to improve social justice in the broadest sense possible. The new plan builds on the important work we have accomplished over the previous years and reinforces our commitment to supporting UNESCO and its mandate. It is also informed by hope: hope that by taking action now, we can contribute to a better future for all. I am quite optimistic about the future as we all work together to make this plan a reality.



Roda Muse

Secretary General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Like many people around the world, I began a new job during the COVID-19 pandemic, joining the Canadian Commission for UNESCO in May 2021. Despite being a relative newcomer to the Commission, I have been keenly aware since my arrival that the organization's mandate has never been more relevant or important.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and underlined the interconnected nature of the social and environmental issues we face and the need to mobilize knowledge to address them. Given its culture and capacity, UNESCO as an organization is well positioned to mobilize people to act and make targeted, effective contributions to pressing global issues.

One such issue, the climate crisis, continues to create existential difficulties for people all over the world. UNESCO is responding to this through its site-based designations including World Heritage Sites, Global Geoparks and Biosphere Regions. These are learning sites for sustainable development in diverse ecological, social and economic contexts, where people come together to find innovative solutions to global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss.

In many places, Indigenous People are feeling the effects of climate change sharply because of their connection to and reliance on the ecosystems and weather patterns that our warming climate is disrupting. For example, retreating sea ice and changing snow patterns are altering livelihoods and cultural connections for Indigenous People in Canada's North.



“...the Commission demonstrated its culture of cooperation and its role as a convener, and it will continue this important and influential work in the year ahead.”

But at the same time, Indigenous Peoples are leading the way in conservation and sustainable development, sharing their valuable traditional knowledge as stewards of the environment. Part of our work at the Commission this past year has focused on decolonizing knowledge and recognizing the value and importance of Indigenous knowledge. We must continue to ensure that this knowledge is recognized nationally and internationally. Meanwhile, the recent discovery of mass graves underscores the importance of promoting the truth in order to work toward reconciliation.

Over the past difficult year, through its networks and its role as an advisor to the Government of Canada, the Commission demonstrated its culture of cooperation and its role as a convener, and it will continue this important and influential work in the year ahead. I look forward to seeing what we can achieve together.

The background of the page is a dark blue world map. A large, semi-transparent white circle is centered on the map, creating a cutout effect that reveals the continents of North and South America on the left, and Africa and Europe on the right. The text is overlaid on this white circle.

Our international reach

At the heart of our work are ongoing efforts to engage our networks and partners to help governments and UNESCO respond to complex global challenges that require concerted solutions. We tap into the brainpower at our disposal—and the social capital of our broader Commission—to spark thought, debate and creative responses to multi-faceted issues like climate change, inequality and, this year, the global pandemic.

This often means attending international conferences and conventions, where we find opportunities to meet experts, exchange ideas and kickstart debates and projects. There were fewer events than usual in 2020–21 because of the pandemic, and those that did take place were mostly virtual—but our influence at them remained important.

An example of what our collaborations with other commissions can lead to is Arctic Springtime 2075: An Informed Speculation. We partnered with the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO to publish this important article on the perils of the climate crisis. In this science-based scenario that is a warning to us all, Professor David J. Drewry imagines the world in 2075 radically transformed by climate change.

Another noteworthy collaboration with UNESCO in 2020–21 was the World in 2030 Survey. This global survey, undertaken with the support of our Commission, sought the views of individuals from around the world—an approach that marked a distinct departure from UNESCO's normal consultation procedures. The findings informed the development of UNESCO's medium-term strategy, which will be approved at the 41st General Conference.

In November 2020, CCUNESCO participated in the launch of the Charter for an Accessible, Inclusive and Equitable Culture. Led by Exeko, a social innovation organization, the charter is the culmination of a collective and participatory process pursued by 11 cultural institutions in Montreal along with social, community and arts organizations.

CCUNESCO has been a partner since the project's outset and has helped to ensure the charter's international distribution and translation into English, Spanish, Catalan and Portuguese, with the help of the Andorran National Commission.

UNESCO networks and committees in Canada: New developments

UNESCO SCHOOLS NETWORK

In 2020–21, we added seven new schools to the network: Spitzee Elementary School (Alberta), Hatzic Middle School (B.C.), Hazelton Secondary School (B.C.), Acadia Junior High School (Manitoba), General Byng School (Manitoba), St. Lewis Academy (Newfoundland and Labrador), and École Canadienne-française (Saskatchewan).

In addition, in partnership with the Centre for Global Education, we hosted virtual student conferences for the UNESCO Schools Network on media and information literacy, anti-Black racism, the Sustainable Development Goals and International Women's Day. We also partnered with the EdCan Network on a public awareness campaign as well as the launch of a special issue of its Education Canada Magazine focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals.



UNESCO CHAIRS

In 2020, with the creation of five new chairs, Canada reached a total of 28 UNESCO Chairs.

A major achievement in fall 2020 was a collaboration with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to publish Imagining the Future of Knowledge Mobilization: Perspectives from UNESCO Chairs, a collection of seven essays by UNESCO Chairs. Knowledge mobilization strategies range from co-creation, knowledge exchange and creative dissemination techniques to decolonizing knowledge and practising open science. This collection of papers takes these ideas further, with insights into how knowledge mobilization can help us confront formidable contemporary challenges like the climate crisis, socio-economic inequities, a global pandemic and the growing menace of skepticism toward knowledge itself.

CCUNESCO also participated in UNESCO's Futures of Education initiative—a global consultation to reimagine and rethink education by 2050—by sharing the contributions of six Canadian UNESCO Chairs through a publication and blog post.

“We need to include the voices and stories of those who are most marginalized in our society, using multi-stakeholder approaches to combat the insidious disease of profiling. Mental health, social services, public safety, public security, community activism and education must work together to rid ourselves of this terrible social ill.”

- Vivek Venkatesh

COALITION OF INCLUSIVE MUNICIPALITIES

In 2020–21, the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities network grew in size and impact, with 15 new municipalities joining, including the Quebec cities of Laval and Percé, the city of Guelph in Ontario, and the towns of Olds in Alberta, Grand Bay-Westfield in New Brunswick, and Battleford in Saskatchewan.

The Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities also connected Vivek Venkatesh (from the UNESCO Chair in Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism) to communities and police forces on a project to address racial and social profiling. He and his team gathered stories from people with lived experience of profiling to produce PROFILE: A Toolkit on Racial and Social Profiling to help communities and police forces better understand the impacts of profiling and identify ways forward.



| *Clayoquot Biosphere Trust/Sander Jain*

UNESCO BIOSPHERE REGIONS

There are already 18 Biosphere Regions in Canada spanning an area of some 235,000 square kilometres within the traditional territories of some 50 Indigenous communities. [Át'l'k7atsem/Howe Sound](#) in British Columbia is set to become the 19th Biosphere Region in Canada.

Biosphere Regions, like all UNESCO designations, are subject to rigorous standards. The Secretariat has been coordinating periodic reviews of the Bras d'Or Lake and Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Regions.

In fall 2020, CCUNESCO held regional workshops to deploy the new branding and communications strategy for biosphere regions Canada. The goal is to help these areas showcase their actions and reach new audiences and funders.

YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

We believe young people are essential partners in building more just and peaceful societies, so we strive to reflect their views in our work and activities. Our Youth Advisory Group helps us structure and sustain youth engagement across our programming. It consists of 26 dedicated, creative members from across Canada who participate in our initiatives.

In 2020–21, members engaged with programme officers to create reflection papers and organize and attend online panels and events. They also contributed to an ongoing conversation around the development of our new strategic plan. In spring 2021, the network welcomed a new cohort of young people.

In March 2021, we published a reflection paper from Youth Advisory Group member Ryan Murphy titled [Beyond Bitcoin: Blockchain technology's hidden potential](#). This paper outlines the social implications of blockchain technology.



King's Cove Lighthouse/John Calder, Discovery UNESCO Global Geopark

UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS

In July 2020, two new UNESCO Global Geoparks were announced: Discovery and Cliffs of Fundy.

The Discovery UNESCO Global Geopark provides visitors with a unique opportunity to explore spectacular seascapes and to learn about the earliest fossils of animal life. With rock dating back to more than half a billion years, the area contains some of the most spectacular and best-preserved Ediacaran fossils in the world. The Discovery Geopark, a part of which overlaps with the traditional lands of the Beothuk people, is located on the Bonavista Peninsula, on Newfoundland's east coast.

As inhabitants of the coasts of the Cliffs of Fundy in Nova Scotia for more than 11,000 years, the Mi'kmaq were the area's first geologists. With more than 40 geo-sites across 125 km, visitors can discover the Earth's incredible natural history, the world's highest tides, Canada's oldest dinosaur fossils, and magnificent landscapes steeped in Mi'kmaq legends, tales and culture, and Acadian traditions.

UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

In 2020–21, we established a partnership agreement with the Creative City Network of Canada to collaborate on network-related activities, advise on Canadian cities' applications to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, and work together on projects related to the role of culture in sustainable development in municipal contexts.

Advancing on our priorities

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO helps Canadians share knowledge locally and globally to create better societies, build peace in the minds of men and women, and address some of the most complex challenges that face the world today. In 2020–21, as in recent years, many of our projects focused on reconciliation, youth engagement, gender and racial equity, and protecting heritage. We also launched a number of initiatives aimed at supporting science for humanity, such as projects related to open science.

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is about establishing a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada. It is a complex, continuous, and multi-faceted approach that aims to promote healing, support the reclamation of Indigenous identity, language, culture and nationhood, and work toward a better future for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

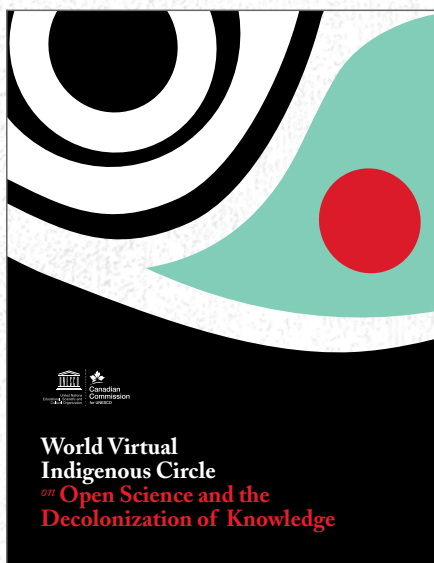


CCUNESCO supports initiatives that promote reconciliation within UNESCO's program areas. By mobilizing our members, networks, and partners, we aim to move the process forward by developing resources and by supporting Indigenous partners who are actively involved in UNESCO's program areas.

Supporting the creation of an international working group on Indigenous cultural heritage

In 2020–21, we worked with ICOMOS Canada (the Canadian committee of the International Council of Monuments and Sites, an international NGO and advisory body to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention) and the Indigenous Heritage Circle to lay the groundwork for an international working group on Indigenous cultural heritage.

While the initial work has focused on Indigenous heritage and world heritage, the need to understand and provide guidance on Indigenous cultural heritage is much broader. The working group aims to become a platform for Indigenous leaders to shape good practice and solid theory in conserving cultural heritage of significance to Indigenous Peoples around the world.



Decolonizing knowledge

In 2020–21, CCUNESCO organized a series of 11 webinars on the theme of Open Science and the Decolonization of Knowledge to contribute to discussions surrounding UNESCO's upcoming Recommendation on Open Science. This important series brought together more than 1,500 participants from 24 countries and included the world's first Indigenous Circle on Open Science and the Decolonization of Knowledge. A paper summarizing the discussions asserted that "despite long traditions of Indigenous science that are now being appreciated and reimplemented, the practice of Western science has systemically excluded Indigenous thought, Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous Peoples."

*Above: Cover page of our publication on open science and the decolonization of knowledge.
Artwork: Coast Salish Frogs by Tseskinakhen, William Good, Snuneymuxw First Nation*

Indigenous land-based education

Land-based education is profoundly rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing, and it encompasses such things as language, geography, cosmologies and, of course, connection to the land. We set up a working group of experts in this area in 2020–21 to find ways to share and distribute information and resources about this important subject.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ON RECONCILIATION

In [The Geography of Stories](#), author Tom Johnson took readers on a journey recounting legend, visiting geological sites, and rediscovering lost words in an effort to overcome the disconnect between land, culture, and the language of the Mi'kma'ki.

We published a blog post on key themes in [Indigenous cultural heritage today](#) with a focus on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous living heritage in Canada.

In an paper published by CCUNESCO, the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanité presents an overview of [key themes and topics in Indigenous language education and revitalization across Canada](#).

CCUNESCO is committed to Agenda 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In Canada, we are primarily involved in advancing SDGs 4 (quality and inclusive education), 5 (gender equality), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 13 (action to combat climate change), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions).

SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) has a particular importance for us, given that partnership is at the heart of our Commission's way of working. To that end, we help our networks engage with different partners and each other to advance these objectives.



GENDER EQUITY

Gender equity is a fundamental human right, a building block for social justice, an economic necessity, and essential to achieving the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. As such, it is an important cross-cutting priority for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. We work to ensure equity for women and girls so that all Canadians can enjoy equal opportunities, choices, capabilities, power, and knowledge. In 2020–21, we mobilized a number of partners to support projects directly related to this priority.

The courage of women journalists

To coincide with the Global Conference for Media Freedom co-hosted by Canada and Botswana in November 2020, and to contribute to broader conversations underway at UNESCO on threats facing journalists, we launched a publication titled Half the story is never enough: Threats facing women journalists in partnership with the Canadian-based NGO Journalists for Human Rights. The publication gives compelling accounts of the struggles and courage of women journalists in Canada and abroad and testify to the importance of their work. It includes a thought-provoking article by journalist Karyn Pugliese on what it means to be an Indigenous woman journalist in Canada.

In December, we published prominent Filipino journalist Maria Ressa's speech given at a webinar that we co-hosted with World Press Freedom Canada titled *Growing threats to media freedom: Democracy under assault*. Ressa describes her experience standing up against injustice. Media freedom is an important priority for UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector.

Post-PhD pathways for women in STEM

In 2020–21, we continued to advance gender equity in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). We published a paper by Liette Vasseur and Jocelyn Baker on post-PhD pathways for women in STEM and discussed its findings in a webinar titled Bursting the academic bubble, co-organized with the Science & Policy Exchange.



ANTI-RACISM

In 2020, we witnessed mounting frustration around the systemic racism that is embedded in so many institutions. The anger was most visibly focused on police, but a new awareness of the impact of systemic racism elsewhere grew dramatically. Fighting racism has long been a UNESCO priority, and anti-racism work continues to be a key focus of CCUNESCO. Our efforts include creating anti-racism tools for cities, collaborating on anti-racism events, publishing articles about racism, and supporting a variety of anti-racism initiatives.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ON ANTI-RACISM

During the pandemic, we saw the disproportionate impact of the crisis on racialized people, Indigenous people, immigrants and low-income families. The struggle against racial discrimination is a central element in our work. We published a blog post calling on readers to join the cause: [A call to mobilize against racism and discrimination.](#)

We also published [A Sense of Belonging: To what? And on whose terms?](#) In this IdeaLab article, author David Divine explores the complexities of belonging, particularly in relation to Black communities in Canada. Who defines acceptance, and why do we seek to belong?

Environmental racism

In summer 2020, we published [Environmental racism in Canada](#) by Ingrid Waldron of Dalhousie University. Waldron's work has been taking on new urgency. This reflection paper explores how systemic racism has so often led to noxious industries and garbage dumps being located near Indigenous and Black communities—and what is being done to fight back.

Equipping educators to fight racism

Educators have long asked for better tools for talking about racism in classrooms. In 2020–21, through our UNESCO Schools Network, we worked with the Global Centre for Pluralism to [deliver anti-racism training to teachers](#) and publish a [policy brief presenting recommendations](#) based on the feedback of participants during and following the training.

We also convened a working group to identify appropriate educational resources on racism and Black history, and drafted policy considerations for the Council of Ministers of Education Canada.



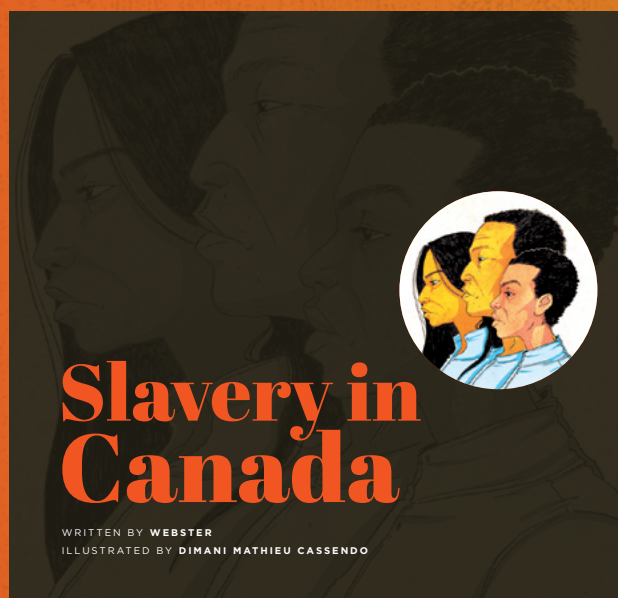
Illustration created by artist Maylee Keo for CCUNESCO's 2021 awareness campaign for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

To observe the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21), CCUNESCO amplified the voices of Canadian organizations that work daily at a community level to fight racism and discrimination. We published a [blog post](#) highlighting the ongoing injustices that result from racism and stigmatization, and introduced readers to some of the organizations and individuals who are leading the anti-racism fight in Canada, such as the Canadian Arab Institute, Developing Young Leaders of Tomorrow Today, the Groupe d'entraide contre le racisme envers les Asiatiques du Québec, and artist, social worker and social entrepreneur Ricardo Lamour.

Understanding slavery in Canada

Finally, we published [Slavery in Canada](#), a booklet written by hip-hop artist and historian Webster and illustrated by Dimani Mathieu Cassendo. Despite the efforts of historians to document nearly 200 years of slavery in Canada, it remains a topic about which most Canadians know very little.



SCIENCE FOR HUMANITY

The “S” in UNESCO stands for “scientific”—and using science for the public good is an important part of the organization’s efforts to build peace through international cooperation. In 2020–21, we undertook several projects with science at their core that intersected with other priorities, such as gender equality, reconciliation, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Open Science imperative

Given the urgent drive throughout 2020 to create COVID-19 vaccines and identify treatments for the virus, it became much more obvious that scientific research should be freely shared among researchers and across borders—a long-standing UNESCO priority. In 2020–21, we accelerated the publication of our own [paper on the role of open science in the decolonization of knowledge](#) and a [related blog post](#).

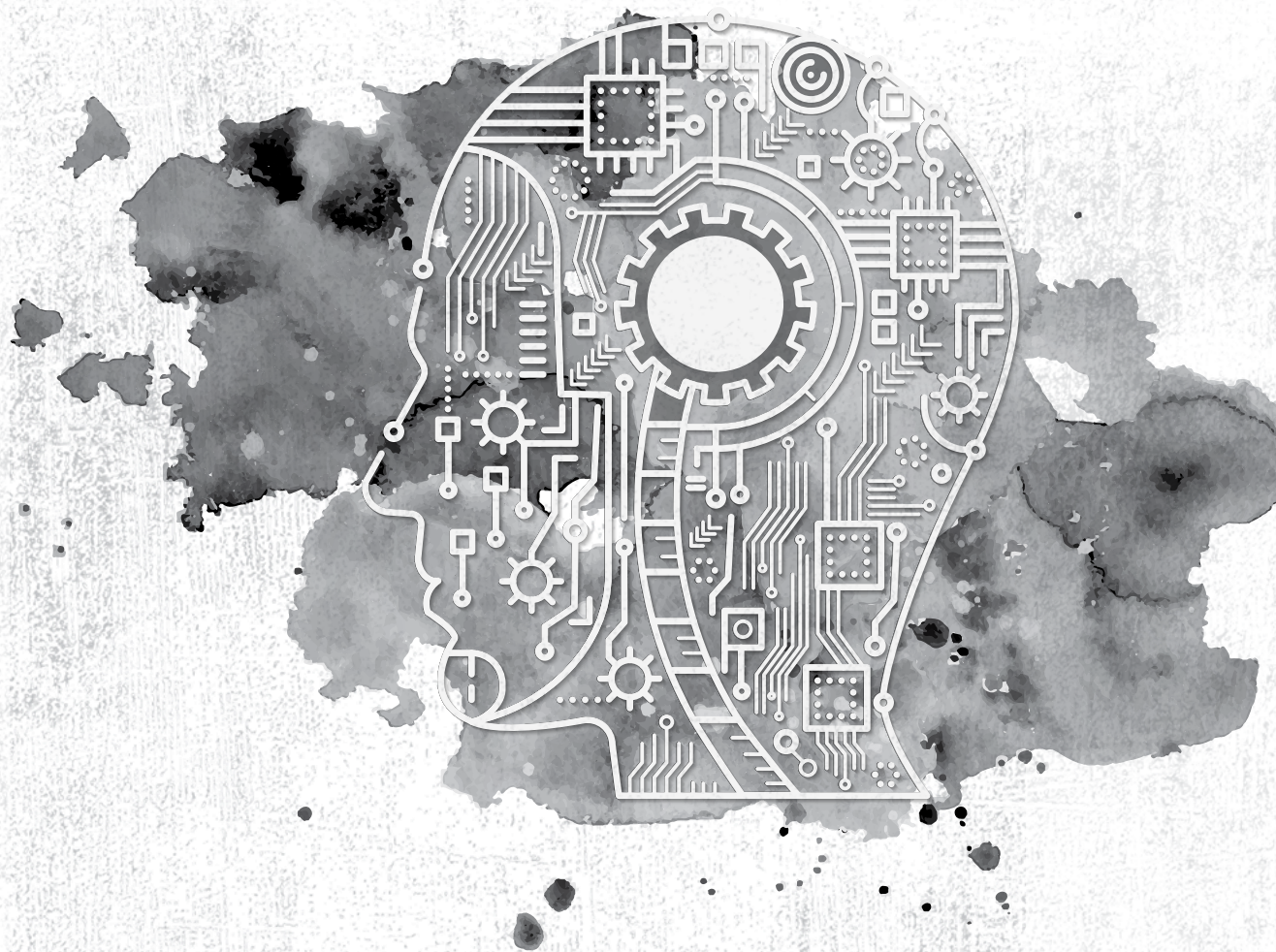
The paper is the result of consultations with our members, including several from our Youth Advisory Group, as well as the offices of the Chief Scientists of Canada and Quebec. It will serve as the basis for consultations on the development of a possible [UNESCO recommendation](#) on the issue.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ON SCIENCE FOR HUMANITY

What is science? Who is it for? Who should it be by? Who is it with? Our blog post, [Some big questions for science](#), returned to some of the fundamentals of science and what is necessary to ensure that science contributes to the good of all.

In [Youth scientists could help solve global challenges _ if we gave them a voice](#), a Canadian Science Fair Journal youth author and editors argue that youth scientists deserve greater recognition for their contributions to place-based, solution-oriented scientific inquiry.





The ethics of artificial intelligence

Last year, we also worked with the Government of Quebec to mobilize funds to help UNESCO advance its consultations on a new recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence (AI). More than \$105,000 was secured from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the National Research Council, the Fonds de recherche du Québec and the Andorra National Commission for UNESCO. These funds enabled Montréal-based partners Mila (a community of more than 500 researchers specializing in machine learning) and Algora Lab to hold a series of online deliberations in support of UNESCO's recommendation on the ethics of AI, which resulted in the publication of an analysis report.

In November 2020, we launched a working group on the ethics of AI. This group brings together experts in AI to share ideas and advance reflections on how Canada might contribute to a global approach to ensuring that AI serves humanity.



THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Launched in January 2021, the UN Ocean Decade is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for nations to work together to generate the global ocean science we need to support the sustainable development of our shared ocean. The Decade is being coordinated by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. The goals are to develop scientific knowledge, build infrastructure and foster relationships for a sustainable and healthy global ocean.

The global ocean

In a blog post entitled [The ocean we need for the future we want](#), we celebrated Oceans Week Canada and encouraged readers to speak up to protect the world's ocean. The post provided links to a variety of online resources aimed at different audiences and encouraged readers to take the opportunity to learn more during Oceans Week Canada 2020.

Mission: Protect our oceans

In partnership with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, children and youth were invited to participate in the Ocean Decade by taking part in a challenge to think up and draw invention ideas to protect our oceans. The best ideas are presented in a [virtual exhibition hosted by Little Inventors](#).



Women in ocean science

In November 2020, we partnered with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the [Canadian Science Policy Centre](#) on a symposium to discuss [Proactively planning for gender equity in the emerging blue economy](#). We also partnered with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Ingenium (Canada's museums of science and innovation) to [promote women in ocean science through a website](#), videos and social media.

Empowering girls and women in the Ocean Decade

February 11 marked the International Day for Women and Girls in Science. We partnered with UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Fisheries and Oceans Canada on a special virtual event on [empowering women and girls in the Ocean Decade](#).



PRESERVING THE WORLD'S HERITAGE

A key focus of CCUNESCO is the preservation of precious heritage around the world—not only physical or natural forms (such as UNESCO World Heritage Sites), but intangible cultural heritage. Much tangible heritage has been lost over the years due to wars, social upheaval, and resourcing issues. Intangible cultural heritage—everything from oral histories and foods to songs and healing practices—connects us with our past and provides a foundation for our lives and identities today. Safeguarding these forms of heritage protects universal access to our artistic, cultural, economic, geographic, linguistic, political, scientific, spiritual, and identity-based heritage.

Memory of the World

The Memory of the World Register preserves and promotes our shared authentic, unique and irreplaceable documentary heritage. It is a symbol of the collective memory of humanity. CCUNESCO maintains the Canada Memory of the World Register and supports submissions to both the Canadian and international registers.

The Canada Memory of the World Register's 2020–21 call emphasized documentary heritage relating to Indigenous Peoples and Black Canadians and received numerous submissions. We added three inscriptions in September 2020:

CHILDREN OF SHINGWAUK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AND SHINGWAUK REUNION FONDS

Founded in 1981 in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, the association was the first community-based national Residential School Survivor organization. For 40 years, it has been gathering photographs, oral history transcripts and audio-visual footage to preserve the evidence of residential school experiences and draw attention to the resilience of survivors.



Photo provided by the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association and Shingwauk Reunion fonds.



The Archives of the Augustinians of Canada. Digitized by Le Monastère des Augustines.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ON THE WORLD'S HERITAGE

In 2020–21, we published a blog post about [celebrating Caribbean living heritage](#), connecting events like the Toronto Caribbean Carnival and the inscription of reggae on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage to the International Decade for People of African Descent.

For people from Afro-diasporic communities, artistic spaces have always been places of self-expression, community and well-being. In an IdeaLab article entitled [Art for our sake: creativity and humanity in the African diaspora](#), Mark V. Campbell explains the tensions that exist within a cultural system that is exploitative and unresponsive to the historical realities of Black creatives.

THE ARCHIVES OF THE AUGUSTINIANS OF CANADA

The Augustinians founded 12 hospitals in Canada, including Canada's first hospital in 1639. Their archives offer more than 375 years of documentary history—including medical, religious, social, political and economic artefacts—and tell the story of providing health care in the New World by adopting Indigenous practices and developing scientific methods.

SELECTIONS FROM THE GOSPELS IN THE DIALECT OF THE INUIT OF LITTLE WHALE RIVER

This is the first book printed in Inuktitut using syllabic characters. Just eight pages, it was printed in 1855 and 1856 in Moose Factory, Ontario, and distributed to Inuit in Nunavik by Christian missionaries. The book documents a significant period of change for Inuit and their way of life.

Intangible cultural heritage

In 2020–21, CCUNESCO hosted the first meeting of the Canadian NGOs accredited to the UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Intangible cultural heritage refers to traditions or living expressions that we inherit and pass on to others, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and more. While Canada is not a signatory to this convention, we see great value in supporting the important work of these NGOs. Going forward, the organizations will meet regularly to share knowledge, raise awareness of intangible cultural heritage across Canada, and support CCUNESCO in its mandate to advise government on intangible cultural heritage matters.

CONFRONTING SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES CONNECTED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2020–21, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted and damaged millions of lives. The crisis shone a spotlight on inequities around the world and emerged not only as a health crisis, but a social crisis. In developed countries, marginalized and racialized populations were disproportionately affected, from infection rates to job losses to access to green space during lockdowns. Around the world, students suffered considerably, and those who were already disadvantaged suffered most. CCUNESCO undertook initiatives to address some of these issues.

The COVID-19 social crisis

We joined forces with the Association for Canadian Studies and the Vanier Institute to create the Social Impacts Network to monitor the social impacts of the pandemic and provide analysis and ideas to help decision-makers respond appropriately. This initiative was guided by an advisory committee of senior government officials, academics and civil society members. Our particular interest was in how the pandemic affected racialized people and newcomers, and how this information might support the goals of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.

Resources for parents

Our Commission also supported two important publications about education in the context of the pandemic. One of them—a blog post that provided resources for parents and educators in support of housebound students—was circulated by the EdCan Network and CBC/Radio-Canada. The other, an IdeaLab article on the challenges and opportunities in education raised by the pandemic, was prepared in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair in Curriculum Development at UQAM.



Building back better

In collaboration with the UNESCO Chair in Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability at Wilfrid Laurier University, we established a post-COVID-19 task force called Building Back Better, to which several UNESCO Chairs and researchers contributed. In its position paper entitled Infrastructure investments for a greener, more resilient and sustainable country, the group proposed policy considerations and options for investments that could contribute to a post-COVID-19 economic recovery while strengthening the resilience and self-sufficiency of our communities and the fight against climate change.

This position paper introduced a series of policy briefs focused on ecosystems and biodiversity, green infrastructure and food systems, and were published on iPolitics:

- Investing in ecosystems: the cornerstone for sustainable renewal of the Canadian economy
- Now is the time to build sustainable food system resilience
- Green infrastructure can revive post COVID-19 world
- The role of geoparks in Canada's sustainability
- Building back better with Canadian biosphere reserves

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP DURING THE PANDEMIC

In a blog post entitled COVID-19 is creating a world crisis in education, we examined how the world's pandemic response was shaping up and included our recommended online resources.

We also wrote about fighting disinformation during a pandemic. Throughout 2020–21, disinformation spread its tentacles into the COVID-19 pandemic. We posted suggestions for detecting and fighting fake news.

We published Montreal, landscapes and lockdown, an article by Philippe Poullaouec-Gonidec, then UNESCO Chair in Urban Landscape at the University of Montreal. This insightful piece looks at the consequences of the health measures and restrictions imposed during the spring 2020 COVID-19 lockdown in Montreal and exposes the impacts on certain urban spaces.



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