

A new UN for a new world order



Tim Unwin

Chairholder UNESCO Chair in
ICT4D

For LIMUN

25th February 2022



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London

The UN as bastion of human rights and all that is good?

UN founded after 1939-45 war and committed to “maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights”

(<https://www.un.org/un70/en/content/history/index.html>)



UN HQ, New York

I should stress that I have many good friends in the UN system



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London



What's wrong (or perhaps right) with this?



UN Geneva main building

Slightly larger at one of the UN gates in Geneva...



UN Geneva


It's amazing what can be done with Photoshop!



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London



If the UN
didn't exist we
would have to
create it

But it would
look very
different to
what we now
have

Rwanda Genocide 1994 Museum – a reminder



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London



What has the UN done to stop war in Ukraine in 2022?



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London



WOLFGANG SCHWAN/ANADOLU AGENCY VIA GETTY IMAGES

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ukraine-invasion-latest-pictures-s98bpt7b3>

<https://ict4d.org.uk> <http://unwin.wordpress.com>

Our thoughts with the people of Ukraine and Russia



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London



Seven challenges and seven recommendations for the UN system



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London

Challenge 1



UN HQ New York

*The UN largely serves
the neo-liberal political
interests of the USA and
its allies*



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London

Recommendation 1

- **Increasing diversity and changing the power relationships within the UN**
 - UN Security Council needs to be fundamentally restructured
 - New locations should be identified for the headquarters of UN agencies and the central Secretariat
 - More attention and resourcing need to be given to those UN agencies concerned with reducing conflict and maintaining peace
 - The US is a failing state; China is the present and future

Challenge 2



UN Security Council Chamber, New York

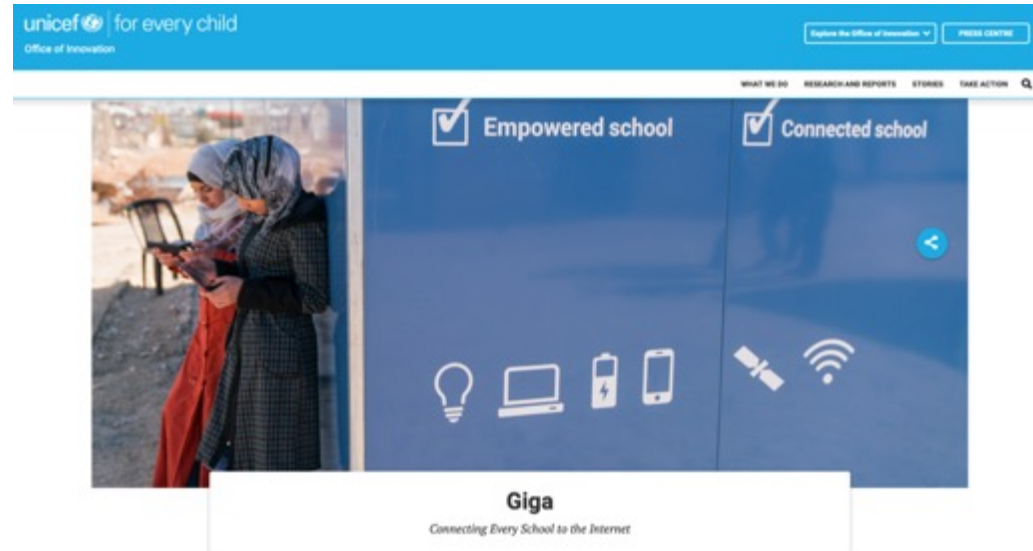
*The UN does not appoint
the most capable and
appropriate people to
senior leadership
positions*



Recommendation 2

- **Improving the quality and diversity of the UN's leadership and senior management: creating a new review office for all appointments to**
 - Review all short-listed or nominated applicants against the criteria required for the specific post, ensuring that they have the experience and expertise to fulfil the role; and
 - Serve as a search facility that could identify additional people who might be appropriate for upcoming appointments.

Challenge 3



Giga <https://www.unicef.org/innovation/giga>

What size should the UN be? Should its agencies aspire to be implementers of development interventions themselves, or should they instead mainly provide guidance and good practices for governments to implement?



Recommendation 3

• Towards a smaller, more focused UN

- Eliminating most of the work that UN agencies do in trying to implement their own development initiatives.
- Most UN agencies are neither well designed or appropriately staffed actually to implement effective on-the-ground development interventions, yet huge sums of money are wasted on attempts to implement their own development projects.
- Should replace this with a clearer focus on delivering appropriate training and support for governments so that they can deliver relevant development programmes within their our countries.
- The UN should nevertheless continue trying to improve and co-ordinate the important humanitarian and peacebuilding initiatives in which it is already engaged.

Challenge 4



SDGs have already failed, but the UN persists in their propagation primarily in its own interests, so that UN agencies can claim they are doing something worthwhile



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London

Recommendation 4

- **Abandoning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030, and plan for a new future for the UN**
 - Should abandon attempts to make neo-liberal democracy the global “religion” that its advocates would like to see
 - Replacing the economic growth agenda with a more balanced view that places the reduction of inequalities at its heart
 - *Our Common Agenda* (2021) does emphasise The need to renew the social contract between governments and their people
 - And the introduction of new measures to complement GDP to assist people in understanding the impacts of business activities and the true costs of economic growth
 - Shift away from the dogma of the primacy of universal human rights to a recognition that these need to be balanced by individual and governmental responsibilities

Challenge 5



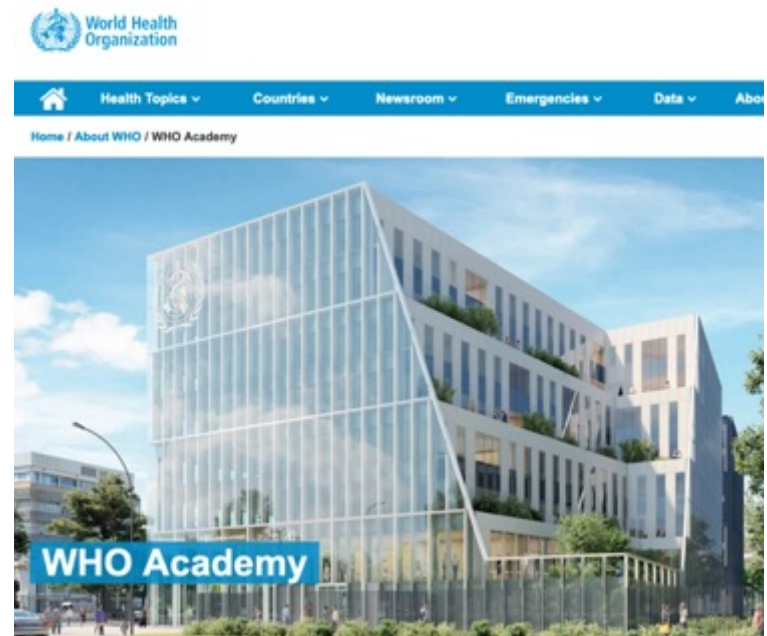
The UN system is beset by duplication of effort, overlap, and reinvention of the wheel between agencies, between the Secretariat and the agencies, and even in larger agencies between the various silos within them



Recommendation 5

- **Removing duplication, overlap and reinventing the wheel**
 - The creation of much tighter and precise mandates for its central Secretariat and each of its agencies
 - Strengthening of existing structures designed to enable effective cooperation and collaboration
 - UN System [Chief Executives Board](#) for Co-ordination (CEB) and the [High-Level Committee on Programmes](#) (HLCP)
 - More effective collaboration between the UN and existing regional organisations which often have a much better understanding of regional issues than do UN agencies
 - Senior leadership of the UN system should give greater attention to delivering effective co-ordination in policy and practice, but this should be done through existing mechanisms rather than by increasing the power of the UN Secretary General and his close colleagues

Challenge 6



WHO academy to be completed by 2024

The UN's ambitions go well beyond the budget available to fund them



Recommendation 6

- **Rebalancing the budget for a leaner UN**
 - HQ and agencies must show they are delivering on what countries really want
 - Smaller UN would require less funding that could be better targeted
 - More countries should be encouraged to fund the UN and its agencies properly
 - Value for money should be of the utmost importance; if members see no value in an agency then it should be shut down
 - Restrictions might have to be placed on private sector funding

Challenge 7



Gates, Guterres and Ma: HLP on Digital Co-operation

The SDG agenda, the lack of UN funding, and the opportunistic behaviour of many global corporations mean that the private sector has been able to subvert the UN's global governance structures in its own interest



Recommendation 7

- **Restructuring global governance and establishing all multi-sector partnerships on a rigorous basis**
 - The UN should largely disengage from the private sector to better serve people through their governments
 - All UN partnerships with the private sector should be based on transparent and rigorous partnership practices
 - A focus more on delivering effective training for governments to be able to implement their own development interventions would require less funding than UN agencies delivering interventions themselves

Conclusions:



Focusing on doing a few things well: assisting governments to serve the interests of the most marginalised



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London

The **UN** can **WIN**



But only if it
fundamentally
changes what it does



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London

And it doesn't forget its core purposes



To maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations and promote social progress



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London

Explore more at <https://unwin.wordpress.com>; and <https://ict4d.org.uk>



LIMUN 2022

London International Model United Nations



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London