

## Social Issues and Solutions in UNESCO's MOST Strategic Plan: A Critical Analysis

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### **Abstract**

The Strategic Plan for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) is a mid-term framework introduced by UNESCO in 2016, aiming to guide member countries in addressing social development issues aligned with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This article employs a qualitative content analysis to identify the social issues highlighted in the MOST program, extract the proposed solutions, and critically evaluate the program. The central research question explores what social issues and solutions are presented in the MOST strategic plan and what criticisms arise from these proposals. The hypothesis suggests that the program adopts a positivist approach, treating the world as an object to be shaped by predetermined goals through strategic planning, which generates societal problems. The influence of globalization, cultural hegemony, and a drive for global unification through education and culture to facilitate world management and coordination is evident. The study analyzes the policymaking cycle within the program, including agenda-setting, operational mechanisms, policy support, and capacity building for implementation and evaluation. Key social issues covered in the program include women's and girls' rights, poverty eradication, governance, peace, urbanization, environmental challenges, migration, gender equality, digital technologies, and growing inequalities. The conclusion reinforces that the MOST program reflects a positivist stance, aiming for societal transformation based on globalized ideals of control and coordination, reinforcing the hegemonic role of education and culture.

**Keywords:** Social issue, MOST, UNESCO, Strategic plan, Content analysis.

## Introduction

Among the international programs that seek to manage social transformations are the programs proposed by UNESCO, and one of these programs is the (MOST) program<sup>1</sup>.

UNESCO has sixteen permanent subcommittees, one of which is the Intergovernmental Council for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST). This council is the only council in UNESCO that presents an action plan to the member countries to promote social science research, its application in practice, and the management of social changes. The implementation of the MOST program, which is in the field of humanities and social sciences, started in March 1994. This program contains research guidelines for the production of science and knowledge designed for decision-makers and policymakers. Also, in this program, a lot of effort has been made to strengthen and promote research, promote international scientific-research networks, and strengthen interdisciplinary cooperation in order to build capacity in the fields of social sciences.

More than two decades have passed. since the beginning of the work of the Inter-State Committee for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) in the UNESCO organization as a specialized body of the United Nations, and during this time it has implemented various programs at the national, regional, and international levels. The last program proposed to the countries is the MOST program, which started in 2016 and continues until 2021. These five-year cultural programs are in line with the sustainable development program of the United Nations until 2030<sup>2</sup>; Therefore, the next program from 2022 to the end of 2029 has been recently compiled and proposed.

The current research problem has two main dimensions: a review of the social change management program (MOST) and critical analysis of this program; therefore, the appropriate method of this research is a qualitative method of theme analysis with a critical approach.

Theme analysis is one of the most widely used methods of qualitative data analysis and the first method of qualitative analysis. In this research, the content of the MOST program will be examined first, and its most important themes will be extracted and analyzed. Themes were extracted using MAXQDA software. After analyzing the themes of the mentioned program, it is time to criticize it.

1. UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) program

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

## **1. Conceptual Framework**

The social problem is one of the most important concepts in the field of sociological studies, which lacks common semantic coordinates, so that in each of the modern and postmodern approaches, this concept has a different definition. By looking deeply into the social thought of theoreticians and considering the theoretical literature of this concept, what shows itself in terms of comparison are the intellectual differences in theorizing around this concept. What is clear as a result of this analysis is that "social problem" is only a common verbal concept and does not carry a common meaning (Robbington and Weinberg, 2016).

### **1-1. Modern approach to social problem**

Modern approach to social problems: According to this approach, a social problem is a situation that disrupts the rational organization of society or prevents its realization. In other words, from the point of view of modern thought, the social problem faces an obstacle to the continuation of the path of the actual or potential rational order and has an objective existence independent of the human mind; therefore, whenever a collective phenomenon damages the existing life or the possibility of the emergence of a social order arising from itself, it can be considered a social problem, and after discovering its causes, efforts should be made to eliminate or reduce it as much as possible (Eitzen et al., 2012: 9-10 and Kornblum et al., 2012: 6-13 and Mooney et al., 2009: 2-3). Each of the classical theorists of sociology emphasizes a specific aspect of human society as a social problem in the path of realizing a rational society. For example, with the scientific analysis of the European society of the 19th century, Marx considered the economic-political system of capitalism and the unequal class relations between the owners of the means of production and those who did not have them as an objective social problem, which, in his opinion, hinders the realization of the formation of a rational society.

Usually, there are two main theories about the cause of social problems: the theory that attributes the social problem to conflicts between interests or values. This means that problems do not arise from the inability of people to communicate with each other or to engage in collective action, but rather from a fundamental and rational conflict due to the existence of various interests and values. As mentioned earlier, Marx is one of the theorists of this category; therefore, a social problem may occur due to local social conditions or an unfavorable economic structure, which causes great

inequalities or institutional injustices, in which case the existence of imbalances and impasses from which it is not possible for disadvantaged people to exit is the source of occurrence. The social issue is considered.

Another theory is the theory of social disorganization; according to this theory, social problems arise from situations where people are so far away from their cultures that they are no longer able to understand each other's actions. This opinion is taken from Durkheim's concept of social disorder in his study of suicide.

According to Herman's analysis of social disorganization theory, social problems emerge and existing problems become worse when a society creates or accepts tools for change but is unable to understand, predict, or deal with the consequences of such action. This analysis does not mean that the social problem is only caused by difficulties and disruption in communication, but the society is still in social disorganization while struggling with social changes.

In fact, each of the classical theorists of sociology tried with a macro and universal theoretical plan while objectively knowing the existing social conditions and drawing the coordinates of a rational society (that is, a society in which human life is based on ideals). enlightened people are in better conditions), identify problems and obstacles and provide solutions to solve them (Noorani, 2021: 723-722).

According to Durkheim's ontological positions, as a classical social theorist whose intellectual roots are influenced by the age of enlightenment and modernism, he considers the natural and social world to include real and objective phenomena that are independent of life, and the mind is human.

Following the natural sciences, which consider the world to include natural realities, he imagines the human world as including "social facts" and emphasizes the importance of sociology in understanding these phenomena. According to Durkheim's analogy between natural and social ontology, he emphasizes imagining reality as "object" (Durkheim, 2013: 39 and 21; Durkheim, 2018: 25, 375, and 27; Durkheim, 2011: 36).

Therefore, according to Durkheim's ontological positions, the social problem is a concrete phenomenon that can be objectively observed and recognized. From the point of view of positivists, including Durkheim, the social world is formed from social realities that exist like objects due to their externality and algebraic nature, and they must be defined and explained by relying on tangible characteristics. Accordingly, social issues, as a natural reality, have

an existence independent of human life and cannot be changed by human will. If they appear in the society, like all social realities, they face the human will and impose their effects on all the members of the society against his will (Noorani, 1400: 733).

### **1-2. Postmodern approach to social problems**

On the opposite point and from the point of view of the "postmodern approach," the social problem is a relative, variable, and fluid phenomenon that is defined according to the conditions of "local culture," "ethnicity," "nationality," "race," "religion," and "gender." It can be this view: a social phenomenon becomes a social problem when each social group defines it based on their values; therefore, the social problem is a phenomenon dependent and bound to a specific time and place that a social group must define by relying on its language system. As a result of the social problem, it is only defined by taking a mental path and appropriate to the group requirements, and there is no collective and general solution to solve and reduce it (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018: 120-122, quoted by Noorani, 1400: 723).

As it can be seen, the differences between different views about the concept of social problems are very obvious and deep. In such a way that they can be compared to each other in the form of different and opposite views that only share words.

## **2. Social Issues Addressed in the MOST Program**

The social issues raised in the MOST program are caused by the developments and transformations that occur in different societies following globalization, the implementation of modernization programs in various economic, political, cultural, and social fields, and in third-world or developing countries. It has been given that the countries that produce the problem (developed countries) in the form of medium-term strategic plans (such as MOST) and long-term (such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan) offer and recommend to the member countries of the program to manage social transformations.

The world is undergoing important social changes under the influence of globalization, including global environmental changes and economic and financial crises that have led to an increase in inequality, extreme poverty, deprivation, and basic denial of human rights. These significant developments led to innovative solutions for the global values of peace, human dignity, gender equality, non-violence, and non-discrimination. Young men and women are more

affected by these changes; therefore, they are the main agents of social changes. UNESCO's proposed program manages social transformations through social participation and social innovation, with a special focus on those who are vulnerable, deprived, and excluded.

The Management of Social Change Program (MOST) of UNESCO and the Intergovernmental Council (IGC)<sup>1</sup> provide unique stimuli for advancing, innovative and comprehensive capacity building in the field of social changes and creating bridges between social scientific knowledge, policy public, society and then its implementation.

The MOST program focuses on two priority issues:

- Social participation as one of the basic features of fighting against poverty, weakening inequalities, and moving towards the comprehensive development of societies as one of the key goals of sustainable development and
- Social transformations caused by environmental change, which include: recognition of the need to solve a chain of crises, including the reduction of natural resources, lack of food, water and energy, loss of biodiversity, rapid urbanization and population growth, climate change and natural disasters. Considering that sustainable development has inseparable social and environmental pillars, social and environmental challenges are also associated with it.

In general, the management of social changes is defined as a subject with the dynamics that shape fundamental changes in the contemporary world. The strategic orientation of the program is determined by a joint assessment of what these dynamics are and what they can be for Member States and institutions within Member States with territorial or sectoral competence. The methods through which the program is designed and implemented to improve the connection between knowledge provided by social and human sciences and political processes at all relevant levels. (Report on the review of the first draft of the new MOST strategy (2029-2022), P.11).

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1. Intergovernmental Council



### 3. Content Analysis of the MOST Program: Identifying Key Issues

Table (1): Key Issues

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The priorities of the 2030 agenda in line with sustainable development</li> <li>- Including the principle of universality in the sustainable development of the 2030 plan and achieving the seventeen goals (SDGs) as well as Objectives of the MOST program</li> <li>- Attention and importance to social inclusion policies</li> </ul>	<p>Women and girls</p> <p>Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education and empowerment of women</li> <li>- Education, empowerment, and attention to sports</li> <li>- Encouragement (UNESCO prize in the field of education of women and girls)</li> <li>- Encouraging and commending the innovative and indicative activities that have been implemented by individuals, institutions, and governmental or non-governmental organizations active in the field of women and girls education.</li> <li>- The transition of girls from elementary school to the first grade of secondary school and the complete completion of basic education</li> <li>- Acquisition of literacy skills by teenage girls and young women</li> <li>- Creating safe and violence-free teaching-learning environments against girls that meet their educational needs.</li> <li>- Helping teenage girls and young women so that they can enter the labor market by learning the knowledge and skills they need easily from school and lead them to a successful life.</li> <li>- Achieving gender equality</li> <li>- Child labor</li> </ul>

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Empowering working and street children</li> <li>- The plan to establish a bank for children's social problems (working children, street children, exploitation of children, etc.)</li> <li>- Holding a seminar on the topic of Keller and street children</li> <li>- Emphasis on children's education</li> </ul>
		Eradication of poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Africa</li> <li>- UNESCO's mission in the mid-term strategy 2014-2021 is to help "establish peace, eradicate poverty, especially in Africa."</li> </ul>
		Good governance and peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperation based on research policy (policy)</li> <li>- Active participation of various stakeholders, including civil society representatives, in the policy-making process</li> <li>- It is a prerequisite and the basis for sustainable development of peace.</li> <li>- One of the main missions of UNESCO, as specified in the 2022-2029 medium-term strategy, is to help build peace.</li> </ul>
		Urbanization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental protection and design of livable cities</li> <li>- Among the thematic priorities of the MOST program, the loss of biodiversity due to urbanization and population growth</li> <li>- Investigating issues related</li> </ul>



row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
			to the city and urbanization by organizations and research centers active in the fields of housing and urban development, architecture and reconstruction of urban space, management and planning, municipalities, and welfare.
		Issues related to Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entrepreneurship for African youth within the framework of the strategy defined for Africa</li> <li>- Advising scientific researchers to research sexually transmitted diseases</li> <li>- Declaration of ethical principles related to climate change</li> <li>- Development of new normative tools in fields related to the program</li> </ul>
		Environmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental protection</li> <li>- Climate change has made the environment more vulnerable.</li> <li>- Loss of biodiversity</li> <li>- The future of the planet</li> <li>- Political responses to environmental changes</li> <li>- The connection between science and practice and policy making</li> </ul>
		Citizenship rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The strategic goal of social change management is education to transform citizens into global citizens.</li> <li>- Emphasis on SDG 16, MOST focuses on issues such as citizenship.</li> </ul>

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
		The future of the planet	<div><div></div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Formation of a committee that provides the knowledge needed for the future of the planet.</li><li>- It is a 10-year research platform for the world.</li><li>- Its purpose is to accelerate bringing societies to a sustainable world.</li><li>- Necessity of unification of science and technology to reach a sustainable world</li><li>- Designing the future vision of the earth until 2025</li><li>- Government, business (to invest in science), and civil society with the help of science provide common solutions for the challenges facing the world community.</li><li>- The Science and Technology Alliance is an informal international partnership that supports the future of the Earth.</li><li>- Compilation of three programs related to the environment (the international program of the geographic-biological sphere, the international program of human dimensions, is a close interaction with the global research program on climate).</li><li>- The future of the earth researches new approaches to bring together different disciplines around a common research program.</li></ul></div></div>

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It also provides an international platform for interaction to ensure that knowledge is produced in partnership with society and users of science.</li> </ul>
		Immigration and refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding different forms of migration for policy making</li> <li>- The link between research and social policy to solve the social problem of immigration</li> <li>- Causes of migration</li> <li>- Climatic migration: due to drought, flood, famine, increase in air temperature, etc.</li> <li>- Poverty, instability, marginalization, deprivation, and lack of development and lack of economic opportunities for the vulnerable population.</li> <li>- Migration (opportunity and challenge) can both be the cause of prosperity (if it is voluntary and planned) and deprivation (if it is due to compulsion and emergency).</li> <li>- Immigration causes the potential loss of the national workforce.</li> <li>- Immigration reduces individual poverty (due to the financial assistance of the immigrant to his family).</li> <li>- Non-immigration factors affecting migration, such as the economic system, job system, and various benefits available in the destination country.</li> </ul>

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The connection between immigration and the three pillars of sustainable development</li> <li>- The connection between immigration and globalization</li> </ul>
		Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching young people in MOST schools; for example, the effective role of young people in the processes of strengthening the foundations of democracy and calming the political atmosphere in Burkina Faso</li> <li>- Scientific investigation of the importance of democracy in the academic field; for example, the UNESCO chair in the fields of human rights, peace, and democracy at Shahid Beheshti University</li> <li>- Providing a platform for the growth of civil society, parties, and democracy and preventing social and political blockage</li> </ul>
		Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports and youth</li> <li>- Promoting the role of women in sports</li> <li>- Revival of native and traditional sports</li> <li>- UNESCO is the only specialized body for guiding the physical education and sports program in the world</li> <li>- Advice to governmental and non-governmental institutions and sports experts and professionals</li> </ul>

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports for peace and sustainable development</li> <li>- Improving the quality of physical education and sports</li> <li>- Fight against doping</li> <li>- The role of sports in diplomacy</li> <li>- Sports connection with health, creativity, and sustainable development</li> <li>- UNESCO believes that sports are a powerful tool for social inclusion, gender equality, and youth empowerment.</li> <li>- Values acquired in sports: Like fair play and teamwork, it is valuable to the whole community.</li> <li>- sports and games; They are among the cases that are considered human rights.</li> </ul>
		Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls</li> <li>- Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but also an essential foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world.</li> <li>- Ensuring the effective participation of all women and providing equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.</li> </ul>
		Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In addition to income and wealth, there is inequality in the field of weather and environmental pollutants.</li> </ul>

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The attention of policymakers to the main indicators of development; as with economic growth, it has hindered attention to the compounding effects of inequality, including climate change.</li> <li>- Environmental transformations lead to the emergence of distinct patterns of vulnerability; it also leads to changes in resilience when faced with climate change, biodiversity loss, freshwater scarcity, and other environmental pressures, but also creates the potential for new actions, including at the national and transnational community levels.</li> <li>- Supporting and advocating for the standard and guiding the monitoring of normative tools, including advice to scientific and scientific researchers, with a special focus on joint work with UNESCO's Natural Sciences Division around ethical principles related to climate change; Also, if necessary, the development of new normative tools in the fields related to the MOST program</li> <li>- UNESCO International School of Sciences in the direction of "building sustainable societies, by creating a bridge between research and</li> </ul>

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
			<p>implementation, in order to adapt to climate change in the Caribbean region, from May 28 to June 1, 2018. A scientific activity in this regard, jointly with the presence of 17 UNESCO member countries, was performed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The 2nd UNESCO International Science School on "Promoting Youth Leadership in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean" was held in Havana, Cuba, December 3-5, 2019, with the participation of 19 UNESCO member states.</li> <li>- Social transformations caused by climate and weather changes</li> <li>- The increasing trend of the annual average temperature (climate anomaly rate) of the earth in most parts of the world, including Iran, which has directly or indirectly affected people's lives and livelihoods.</li> <li>- UNESCO uses youth mobilization as agents of change for comprehensive and sustainable social responses to climate change.</li> <li>- Turning young people into up-to-date and future activists and achieving a green economy, green growth, and sustainable development and answering the major</li> </ul>



row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
			<p>concerns of young people about employment and livelihood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Declaration of ethical principles of UNESCO in relation to climate change, which ethical principles are:</li> <li>- Application of science and integrity in decision-making.</li> <li>- Solidarity, sustainability, justice, and a cautious approach</li> <li>- Climate change is an opportunity for positive social developments; among them are social mobilization, examining legal issues, and increasing global solidarity. One of these social developments was the French conference from November 30 to December 11, 2015</li> <li>- UNESCO slogan: "Change of mind, not weather conditions"</li> <li>- Migration due to climate change</li> </ul>
		Attention to ethnic and cultural demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responding to strategic goal 3 in the social transformation management program, which is related to ethnic demands and attention to cultural diversity.</li> <li>- Globalization is very diverse in practice and is often seen as a threat to cultural diversity.</li> <li>- Trying to survive cultural terms</li> <li>- Language is an important sign of cultural diversity.</li> </ul>

row	Overarching themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes
		Social transformation caused by digital technologies	- More dynamism of social developments caused by digital technologies
		Increasing different levels of inequality in countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Covid-19 disease showed this social inequality more and even aggravated it.</li> <li>- Increasing the social welfare gap in different societies</li> <li>- Instability of environmental conditions</li> <li>- Increasing social inequality with social impacts related to digital transformations and artificial intelligence (AI)</li> <li>- Inequality is projected to increase at once in almost all countries for the first time since the beginning of the recessions. These inequalities will not be short-term.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Proposed Solutions for Social Issues in the MOST Program

The society and the social issues related to it have complexities that make the necessity of careful and layer-by-layer investigation inevitable. When social issues are placed in a global context, this complexity is doubled. Of course, from the point of view that the social issue is placed in a general and global context and the details and complexities of social issues are not paid attention to, although logically, it seems simpler and its management is easier. to be But simplifying the problem, the same social problem that is relevant, will lead to a kind of reductionism and will reduce the different dimensions of a problem to one dimension.

In order to understand a problem, one must first recognize it; in other words, one must first describe it, then explain it, and finally provide a solution for it or make a policy. "General policies in a logical sense are two "descriptive" and "explanatory" introductions

and one "value" and "normative" introduction (Alwani and Sharifzadeh, 2017). This rule is correct for all policies and in different fields (cultural, economic, political, social, etc.). It is possible to criticize any policy by criticizing one or two introductions. The constitution, subject laws, religious values, social philosophy, political ideology, and ethics are the most important sources for policy criticism. The effectiveness of public policy in the new world is the result of the emergence and spread of science and its use as one of the sources of policy (Oliver, 2005).

Although there are different definitions for the policy, it can be said simply that public policy is a decision taken for a public problem, but it should be kept in mind that the policy is not just a decision but a process that includes all the actions that are taken from the time of feeling the problem and ending with the evaluation of the results of the implementation of the policy.

The policy pillars of the MOST program in general include the agenda for solving the social issues raised in the MOST strategic plan, operational mechanisms, how to support the MOST policy, and capacity building for implementation.

The following table summarizes the proposed ways to solve social problems in the MOST program:

**Table (2): The proposed ways to solve social problems in the MOST program**

row	Policy cycle of social issues	Recommendations
1	Agenda	International development
		Demonstrating the public value and practical effectiveness of the MOST program
		Operational and clear definition of the program
		Paying attention to the significant changes in international cooperation with regard to the formulation of the 2030 plan for sustainable development
		Empowering people through education
		Attention to sustainable development agendas, including the seventeen SDGs, especially SDG5 (gender equality and empowerment of women and girls)
		Attention to intercultural dialogue

row	Policy cycle of social issues	Recommendations
		Paying attention to the existence of social and even knowledge and scientific inequalities between societies, which showed itself more with the Covid-19 disease.
		Commitment of countries to change
		Not reducing all issues to economics
		It is a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of inequalities on a global scale and setting a focused agenda, building capacity, and supporting approved policies.
		The link between politics and knowledge
		Attention to the global management of social changes in the 2030 agenda
		Participation of member states in policy making
		General policy based on the future
2	Operational mechanisms	Cooperation with agencies, funds, and programs of the United Nations and other international institutions
		Creation of national commissions
		Using all interested groups to implement the program, especially youth and women
		Formation of social science and humanities research associations for policy making
		With the establishment of intergovernmental assemblies, it attracts the decisive support of the member states.
		The important role of MOST schools and UNESCO chairs in managing social changes

row	Policy cycle of social issues	Recommendations
3	How to support the MOST policy and build capacity for implementation	Gradual development of MOST schools to enable focused decision-making and better understanding of the complex world and helping to better imagine the future
		Operationalizing a comprehensive policy with three components: provision of financial resources, provision of human resources, and technical advice to official policy experts
		Secretariat support to member countries to implement the program and recognize the institutional hierarchy
		Support of knowledge, especially social sciences and humanities, from policymaking; it means that policymaking has scientific support.
		Applying knowledge to understand the socio-economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and support the actions that are taken to improve the situation and create sustainable social resilience by learning and applying this experience.
		Action to support disadvantaged or traditionally disadvantaged social groups or individuals (such as women) and help provide equal and effective opportunities for all.
		MOST schools' support for evidence-based policy and decision-making, bottom-up needs, and flexibility
		Non-monetary support of member countries in the implementation of strategic plans for the management of social changes

row	Policy cycle of social issues	Recommendations
		Supporting external communications as a long-term strategic lever to strengthen and increase awareness of social change management
4	Evaluation	<p>It examines and re-evaluates the implementation process by highlighting the challenges encountered and lessons learned and suggesting possible adjustments to increase productivity. The program will assess the level of achievement of the goals, taking into account the available resources, the expected biennial results, and the impact of the innovations.</p> <p>Performance evaluation of MOST schools is done in two ways:</p> <p>1) Short-term evaluation is based on the quantitative and qualitative participation of teachers and students in the learning process.</p> <p>2) mid-term evaluation: which is based on a performance goal, such as a) expanding the set of trainers and b) the amount of participation in the community of action (teachers) and goal (students)</p>

### 5. Critiques of the Management Approaches in the MOST Program for Addressing Social Issues

According to the definition of the social issue, it was found that the approach of the MOST strategic plan to social issues is a modernist approach. On the other hand, the approach of the MOST program is generally a positivist approach, which also originates from the approach of modernism. Therefore, the approach of the MOST program to social issues is a modern approach, and its methodological approach is positivist, which itself causes criticisms of this program, which are as follows:

- 1- If they define a problem in international social, cultural, economic, and even political programs, then they introduce the problem and issue to that society. Without knowing what the real

social problem of that society is and what problem has caused the collective conscience of that society to be wounded. In fact, with this positivist approach of international management programs, the world community is considered as a single society with a collective conscience that the behavior, actions, and performance of different societies, if they are against the international custom, are in particular unconventional social actions arising from the contexts of third world societies that cause the collective conscience of the Western international community to be wounded (for example, lack of gender equality, lack of democracy, etc.). In their opinion, the social issue represents a deviation from the standard of development of the first world societies: Western or capitalist. After they have introduced the issues to the societies, they first discuss and exchange opinions on those social or cultural issues in the civil society or the academic and university society. After stimulating the mind and creating a need in society, especially among the youth, women, and civil society, they provide a solution to fulfill that cultural or social and even political need and thus manage the societies indirectly.

- 2- In addition to paying attention to the types of gatherings, Durkheim emphasizes another criterion to determine the abnormal and social. In his opinion, in addition to determining the examples of social issues being changeable in terms of place, it is also variable in terms of time. This means that in order to determine the abnormality of a social phenomenon, it is necessary to pay attention to the time period in which that particular social type is located. The time period refers to the stage of social evolution in which the assumed society is located historically" (Durkheim, 2013: 76-75 and Durkheim, 2016: 111-113 and Durkheim, 2018: 159-159). As can be seen in the above text, according to the positivists, whose classic representative is Durkheim, the social problem in the developing, third world, or transitioning societies is considered anomalous if it is still That society is in transition and is not in line with the standards of industrial societies and the first world; therefore, it is those societies that determine the criteria of what is normal and what is abnormal in the stage of social evolution.
- 3- From Durkheim's point of view, a social phenomenon can be considered a social problem when it has these three characteristics: 1) not being general, 2) lack of function, 3) exceeding natural limits. And these characteristics can be



recognized according to the type and period of evolution of that society. Expressing the mentioned characteristics means that, from the point of view of this thinker, the diagnosis of social problems must have criteria and indicators, and on this basis, social problems can be reliably distinguished from other social phenomena" (Noorani, 2021: 733) [in Persian]. According to the above paragraph, it is a social issue that is not public; that is, it is not public in terms of the international community, so it has no function, and because it has deviated from the natural limits of the norms of the international community, therefore, it has become a social issue. The objective criterion and index for diagnosing social issues are fixed (as it was said, the criterion and index are determined by advanced societies and international institutions, including UNESCO); but the background and social contexts of the application of these criteria are variable.

- 4- An obvious and fundamental criticism of this strategic plan is that it first defines a problem for different communities and provides a solution according to that problem and then evaluates the level of successful implementation of the plan, whether the community in question is in line with the main goal of achieving sustainable development by 2030 or not? All the plans show a single and integrated global management, or, in other words, turning the world into a unipolar system, that too through cultural hegemony.
- 5- One of the dimensions of policy making is its normative dimension. Since the strategic plan of MOST is an executive instruction for social issues, it has a strong normative dimension that leads the social issues of the member countries to a specific direction.
- 6- Policies guide our thinking in decision-making; they specify the range within which future decisions should be made. The policies can be named as personal policies and so on. The policy is a general program that is considered as a guide for managers. This means that high-ranking managers have a prominent role in determining the general and national policy. The way to implement the program for the organization's implementation officials is determined by the policy, and it is also considered an effective means to control operations (Rezaian, 2017: 132). According to the above paragraph where the features of the policy were stated, it should be said: since the MOST program is a strategic plan for policy making, therefore, it is a practical guide for policymakers and social activists (women and youth)

of different countries to control operations, implementation, and social events.

7- Among the factors that cause the production and creation of social problems and the production of needs are media (according to post-modernists such as Baudrillard), social, cultural, and international programs; It is like MOST (according to positivists like Durkheim); because "the media is not a value-neutral tool, this tool has the necessary ability to build a hyper-reality world and complete its simulation project. In this situation, the media, by distorting the two-way relationship between the sender and receiver and the basis of social responsibility hidden in them, brings people into meaningless relationships that rely on signs and the simulated world. (Baudrillard, 1998: 34-39 and 181-198). In this world, on the one hand, the media presents a world of simulated meta-realities to humans through the decoupage industry (revision of signs) and the production of mass amounts of signs and information, and on the other hand, along with the collapse of meaning. It shows that the observers of the cultural meanings are the centers of power (Baudrillard, 1994: 72-89). Based on this, according to Baudrillard, the media is a non-neutral tool that can create phenomena compatible and incompatible with social values (Baudrillard, 1994: 82).

8- Interfering in the internal affairs of countries and providing preparations for global management: political and economic arrangements of governments are not enough to guarantee stable and pure support for the people of the world. Peace must be based on dialogue and mutual understanding and be based on solidarity and intellectual and moral coherence of humanity. In other words, a strategic error has occurred; that is, "an international commitment became the center of planning for the country's educational action" (Parsania, 2022: 57).

## **6. Critique of the Methodology**

As it was said, MOST strategic plan is a plan that proposes suggestions for managing social changes to the member countries until 2030. This long-term planning, for the next fifteen years (from 2015 to 2030), requires an approach. It is futuristic, but unlike the usual method in future studies, which has a post-structuralist approach, this program's approach to managing social changes in the future is a structuralist and positivist approach. That is, he imagines the world as a single structure and complex, inside of

which there are multiple components called UNESCO member countries, which with this program are the percentage of homogenization of the components of the complex and the homogenization of the whole complex and the world.

If the issues that are included in the program and made a policy for it; such as the education and empowerment of girls, women, working children, youth, gender equality, etc., should be in line with the goals and policies of the statesmen of those countries, it will speed up the process of implementing the program; But if it is not consistent, it will create a public demand that is not consistent with the ideology and executive policies of the government and even cause popular resistance and social movements. For example, the modernization policies of the Afghan society were implemented without civil obstacles before the Taliban and in the past twenty years. But with the emergence of the Taliban, these policies, for example, public education and women's empowerment, etc., are against the radical and fundamentalist ideology of the Taliban. Therefore, we see that the current government of Afghanistan always faces challenges and civil movements.

## **7. Critique of Gender Equality Approaches**

Equality between men and women can be imagined in three situations: first, before the law; second, educational equality in the principle of education, that is, women and men have the right to benefit from education, and education should not be prohibited for any of them. This is completely compatible with our Islamic and cultural standards. Equality of education regarding different subjects means that education should not have any special subject or priority over women or men. This meaning of equality, which is rooted in the sustainable development document, is against the culture, religion, documents, and laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The third is related to gender identity differences. The viewpoints that consider such identities to be merely a cultural and historical matter and do not attach any truth or real role to them call any kind of gender identity determination of this type against human rights, and this meaning of gender equality is contrary not only to the culture and religion of Islam but also to all heavenly and other religions, which is mentioned in the 2030 national document as "negation of gender stereotypes." Ignoring gender identities, it is not possible to give special priority to the roles of mother and housewife. In this case, the result of gender equality is that the family can consist of two women or two men; therefore, the United Nations has redefined

the family in international documents. From their point of view, the family is not limited to the natural family consisting of a husband and wife, but they consider any group that lives together under the same roof as a family institution. In other words, acceptance of gender equality leads to gender equality and acceptance of homosexuality (Parsania, 2022: 74-75).

### **Conclusion**

Since we live in this world, we are bound to interact with other countries, and part of this interaction is related to the United Nations. Not only do we have no escape from the issue of interaction, but we must also have an active presence, and perhaps we can exert influence in many treaties, including in UNESCO. So, in principle, the connection and use of other countries' experiences is not opposition or criticism but criticism on the manner and limits of interaction (Parsania, 2022: 52).

The MOST program emphasizes experimental science (observable, testable, and generalizable) and positivist humanities and social sciences. Following the objectification of the world, it creates problems and needs for countries and provides solutions and plans to solve those problems. The goal of these programs is to reach a world whose characteristics have also been determined, including sustainable development in various economic fields (welfare, poverty eradication, and expansion of industry), political (democracy and good governance), and cultural (gender equality, emphasis on human rights and peace). In order to achieve these goals and solve existing problems in countries such as gender inequality, eliminating discrimination and violence, etc., this program focuses on education (especially the education of women and youth), strengthening and involving civil society, and setting up MOST schools. It emphasizes the formation of humanities and social science associations to solve problems and manage social developments.

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