

## **UNESCO's Fundamental Education in China, 1945–1950:**

### **Between the Geopolitics, Idealism of Post-War Global Governance and Chinese**

#### **Nationalism**

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#### **Abstract**

Facing the giant task of postwar reconstruction after WWII, the newly built United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) managed to mobilize a global network of humanitarian agencies to forge its first flagship project - Fundamental Education. Drawing upon the experience of the education-driven development project that sought to reconstruct China, UNESCO Fundamental Education aimed not only educational reconstruction but also comprehensive societal engineering in the backward areas. This article will bring in a historical constitutive perspective and will locating the initiative of UNESCO Fundamental Education in the history of international aid in modern China. This article will map out a global network of ideas, agencies, agents, institutions, and funds that involved the Rockefeller Foundation, American missionary groups, Chinese educational activists, etc. This article will demonstrate how UNESCO Fundamental Education intercepted and intertwined with nationalism, politics, and group dynamics of activism, etc. in the context of both the post-conflict reconstruction and the civil war. This article argues that the impact of the short-lived UNESCO Fundamental Education project in China and the withdrawal of Western educational aids had an implicit annotation of the Loss of China and the prelude of villages as the Cold War site during the 1950s and 1960s.

**Key Words:** UNESCO, Fundamental Education, Global Governance, China, Rural Reconstruction