IAU Horizons

International Association of Universities (IAU), founded in 1950, is the leading global association of higher education institutions and university associations. It convenes and connects 600 Members from around 130 countries to identify, reflect and act on common priorities.

IAU partners with UNESCO and other international, regional and national bodies active in higher education **and serves as the Global Voice of Higher Education.**

RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF UNIVERSITIES TO FUTURE SOCIETY

IAU
INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITIES
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES BUREAU

MESSAGE FROM
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Dear Members of the IAU,
Dear Members of the broader higher education community,

Welcome to this special issue of *IAU Horizons* which we will officially launch at the IAU 16th General Conference in Dublin. As always, all Members around the world will also receive it by mail.

We are very pleased to meet in person for the first time since 2019. IAU General Conferences are of a special kind. They combine a series of business sessions – relating to the more administrative dimensions of the Association, and in particular the elections of the new President and the members of the Administrative Board –, with a thematic conference. We are thus very pleased to meet face to face in Dublin and to be welcomed by our very dynamic partner and host University College Dublin.

We look forward to lively and constructive debates at such a great venue on the *Relevance and Value of Higher Education to Future Society* with a large delegation of higher education leaders from the five continents.

The world is facing unprecedented challenges and universities have a very important task to fulfil. They have to ensure that those who attend university benefit from the best possible education and research opportunities to respond to the challenges and seize opportunities arising in the most adequate, ethical, and valuable way for the future of people and the planet. The future is today and we have to help shape it together through active and interactive dialogue among people and cultures.

As one of the background documents that delegates will find in their Conference bags, this issue offers a set of papers that are to fuel conversations at the General Conference and around the world.

This magazine opens with a presentation of the topics that will be debated as part of the broader General Conference's theme and presents reflections on the four IAU thematic priorities: Globally engaged and values-based leadership; Internationalisation; Higher education and research for sustainable development and the Digital transformation of higher education. It highlights key opportunities for your university to get involved and contribute to the work of the IAU.

The In Focus section offers a rich set of papers from university and organisation leaders, professors, researchers and students who share their thoughts on different aspects that define quality higher education for the common good and what needs to be done to ensure the relevance of the higher education sector to future society.

We hope you'll enjoy reading these pages and look forward to receiving your reactions and comments.

Happy reading,

Hilligje van't Land, PhD
IAU Secretary General

IAU Horizons 27.2 – Contents

IAU Horizons is published twice a year in English, in paper and online. Please feel free to circulate widely and reproduce as you see fit as long as you cite the authors properly and refer to the International Association of Universities (IAU) and to the magazine in full. Please contact us at iau@iau-aiu.net. We look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions.

IAU EVENTS

IAU STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

IAU KNOWLEDGE HUB

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IAU EVENTS

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IAU 16th General Conference

RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF UNIVERSITIES TO FUTURE SOCIETY

About the General Conference

This year IAU is convening in Dublin, Ireland. Members are gathering to discuss the **Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society**. The General Conference brings together leaders of higher education from around the world with expertise in many fields of study and disciplines, representing various types of institutions and contexts, facing different opportunities and challenges. The Members come together as we share a common passion for higher education; through international collaboration, we know that the sector responds best to emergent challenges and finds solutions; we do so with a sense of solidarity that is informed and reinforced by the rich diversity among our Members and their local contexts.

Programme

The IAU 16th General Conference offers opportunities to exchange with peers, get inspired by innovative approaches and to be part of a vibrant community that conveys the voice of higher education at the global level.

Framed by the topic **Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society**, the programme includes speakers from some 50 countries. Transformation is not new to the sector. Over centuries of existence, universities have adapted to externally imposed regulations, norms and pressures and have been responsive to societal expectations and changes in their environment. Even when faced with complex challenges and limited financial resources, universities operate from a position of intellectual abundance and constitute a global landscape

of knowledge and ideas. Universities are uniquely placed to propose solutions and develop opportunities. This conference offers an ideal setting for discussing whether and how higher education needs to transform to stay relevant and of value to future society.

As a complement to the conference programme, the 'In Focus' section of this magazine (page 15) is devoted to the theme of the conference. Here, authors from different parts of the world share views on opportunities as well as challenges related to the transformation that the sector is currently experiencing.

Business sessions

While the IAU International Conference convenes every year, the General Conference normally comes together every four years as the supreme decision-making body of the Association. Due to the pandemic, the General Conference was postponed and takes place for the first time in 6 years. IAU Members will come together to discuss past achievements, set the direction forward, and most importantly elect the next IAU President and the members of the Administrative Board.

Thank you

If you are reading this magazine in Dublin, Ireland, we wish you an excellent and stimulating Conference. In case you cannot take part in this year's event, we hope that you will enjoy the contributions to the topic in the 'In Focus' section and we invite you to consult the speakers' presentations that will be made available on the Conference website after the event. IAU would like to take this opportunity to thank University College Dublin (UCD) for hosting this important event and offering a vibrant setting for Members and beyond to come together and exchange, learn and identify new perspectives and ambitions. We also extend our gratitude to all IAU Members that make up this association and together form the *global voice of higher education*.

Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society

The IAU 16th General Conference offers a forum to reflect on universities' function in society and their contribution to building a sustainable and inclusive future. It also asks in what ways universities need to change to be more transformative in effect. Beyond the idea of change, it also provides a place for reflection about what needs to be preserved or valued to uphold the very idea of the university in society.

IAU 2022
16th GENERAL CONFERENCE
RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF UNIVERSITIES TO FUTURE SOCIETY
25-28 October
Dublin, Ireland

The Transformative Power of Higher Education

What kind of transformations in higher education are needed to be more transformative and create a more equitable and sustainable society for the future?

Responding to Local Needs in a Globalised World: Compatible or Competing Objectives?

Universities need to successfully bridge and integrate local and global knowledge systems to reaffirm their position in society and show their relevance to the local communities in which they operate. Is this a matter of compatible or competing objectives?

Skills, Competences and Knowledge for Unwritten Futures: Where Do We Go From Here?

In the context of higher education, we must explore what the necessary knowledge, skills and competences are that will shape the future and how universities can provide for them?

Teaching and Learning for Tomorrow's World

In what ways can higher education inculcate a more meaningful sense of collective and individual agency and enlarge the scope of the curricula with deeper social, ethical and conceptual questions that go beyond the immediate purview of the subject matter?

Unlocking Knowledge Systems for an Interconnected Future

What are the pathways toward a meaningful and system-wide discussion on creating knowledge commons with fair access and open knowledge circulation?

How to Build Briges in a World of Increasing Inequalities Between Higher Education Systems?

What are new models and strategies of engagement across the sector and at local, national, regional and global level to better cooperate and synergise resources to build bridges in a world of increasing inequalities?

The Future of Higher Education in an Interconnected and Global Context

What is the future of international cooperation? How can we bring about coherence, build synergies and amplify the significance of higher education to society?

How to Foster a Culture of Democracy and Human Rights in the Curriculum?

If we accept that education is key to safeguarding democracy and human rights, how can universities better leverage their power and sharpen their focus on creating a better world, one that is more equitable, ethical and democratic?

⊙ SAVE THE DATES IAU 2023 – FROM DUBLIN TO DOHA

IAU is pleased to announce that the **IAU 2023 International Conference** will be hosted by Qatar University in Doha. It will convene from **27-29 November 2023**. The event is open to all.

In conjunction with the conference, IAU is also pleased to convene the **Global Meeting of Associations (GMA)** on **30 November**. This event is for the heads of university organizations and networks only.

Mark your agenda and more information will follow soon.

IAU ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ITS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Values-based Leadership

LEADING UNIVERSITIES TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION – FINDING NEW PATHWAYS?

Values-based leadership is an integral part of the vision and mission of the IAU. We foster globally engaged leadership through all our work and activities and take part in key events around the world to advocate for the same. This year, for instance, the Association assumed an important role at the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC) in Barcelona and organised a series of events. The WHEC convened HE stakeholders with the ambitious aim to reshape "ideas and practices in higher education to ensure sustainable development for the planet and humanity".

This article presents outcomes of the IAU roundtable that brought together university leaders from around the world to discuss how to transform higher education institutions so that, in turn, they are more transformative – towards a better world. The debate was structured around five key points.

1. Opening Research and Knowledge Circulation

The last two years have shown that unrestricted circulation and open access to research results and data have saved lives. Open science is necessary for development, and we must question the ethics and economics of the current academic publishing system, research assessment criteria, reward systems, and market-oriented ratings and rankings. The results of which create tensions and exclusivity at the expense of accessibility and inclusivity.

The recent UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science created a global commitment to unlock access to data science and knowledge.1 This is an important step forward to understanding access to knowledge and information as a common public good and human right. The Open Science movement will gradually transform traditionally closed scientific systems into more inclusive, accessible, efficient and transparent interactions and collaborations. However, changing the science eco-system will require major policy reforms, financial support and time.

International networks have a fundamental role to play to engage universities more forcefully in global cooperation in

the implementation of a new social contract together with worldwide academic communities and other stakeholders. There is no substitute for these facilitated multilateral partnerships that deliberately bring institutions together creating a conduit through which knowledge can flow. This, in turn, will help build more peaceful, just and sustainable futures for all.

2. Reappraising the Mission of Education

The mission of education must encompass dignity, inclusivity, and provide emancipatory knowledge, which is attentive to humanising pedagogies. One that takes responsibility for the planetary needs, and the balance between humanity and ecology, it must be liberatory, innovative but also life-affirming and ecologically attentive in its curriculum-development. The UNESCO Futures of Education Report is welcome, timely, and promising as it returns to the principles of a humanistic socio-cultural educational paradigm, in which education is not only geared towards immediate utility, but for edifying and illuminating the future and the research that supports it.[2] This new social contract takes us back to an understanding of education as a common public good, as a fundamental human right.

As a crucial field of engagement towards transformative education, universities must give more value to teaching, pedagogy, and mentoring in staff appraisals and career advancement. Evaluating career advancement based on dubious metrics has had the effect of dehumanising the valuable contributions educators are making in forming the future generations. A different form of appraisal is required, one that looks at achievements more holistically and integrates qualitative assessment across all aspects of developing our students' scholarship and engagement with society.

To break with traditional models, we require concrete proposals and practices. The co-creation of knowledge, for instance, requires a very different pedagogy in comparison to those

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1. https://en.unesco.org/science-sustainable-future/open-science/recommendation

2. https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/

traditionally deployed. By and large, the pedagogies we have correspond to the societies we have; if we wish to change the former, we need to be open to also changing the latter.

3. Recalibrating Relevance and Quality

Historically, universities had a much more local horizon, measuring themselves against other HEIs in the same city or country. Today (international) rankings constitute perhaps the single most important driver influencing university strategies as well as government spending – especially in the global north. Yet, rankings reduce the multifaceted nature and complexity of universities to a single number (which in turn caters to a simplified view of higher education among the populace and governments). This process is flawed because it takes an available metrics, as opposed to any other one, and gives it an arbitrary weighting.

The negative fallout is that universities are driven to maximise their performance on these particular metrics neglecting potentially other contributions for example to their local societies. Rankings have forced them to pursue a single university model – that of a research-intensive university. This is not necessarily appropriate, especially for those that would wish to put more emphasis on other aspects, such as teaching and community outreach.

The paradoxical nature of higher education is that in many jurisdictions, competitiveness exists as strongly as cooperativeness among HEIs. It is one of the interesting tensions of the system that universities vie while also collaborating with each other. The significant challenge is that rankings for some represent the reputational future of the institution. The crucial question therefore is not whether the institution will partner for the global good, but whether they can afford to do so.

On a positive note, rankings have made universities become globally engaged institutions – they have also prompted greater governmental investment in higher education – albeit for the wrong reasons. By commodifying HE, and in particular the internationalisation of higher education, governments have taken the sector in a direction that has skewed the definition, example, and pursuit of a truly globally engaged model of a university. Impact rankings can have positive outcomes when based on the SDGs.

Leaders must break free from the pressures of international rankings to expand the definition of quality and give more appreciation to the local context. Universities must embrace the wider parts of their mission and find appreciation in their operations with regard to social justice, widening participation, climate justice, sustainable development, and thus leverage their contribution in much more local and holistic way.

4. Building Global Citizenship

The panel also debated how higher education can inculcate a more meaningful sense of collective and individual agency and

enlarge the scope of the curricula with a deeper social, ethical and conceptual set of questions that go beyond the subject matter; this has gained crucial importance.

Students along with researchers have potentially the greatest impact on the world; yet they do not have the same confidence in their futures that earlier generations had. We need to address the challenges of our time and ensure that this aim is infused into curricula in a more formal way, potentially through cooperation with universities around the world. IAU and other international networks should develop a common set of models that universities can draw from.

Already, it is very exciting to see that new ways of teaching and outreach are building agency within students. The question "what are universities for" is one that students today answer differently than before. Legitimate economic interests of graduates are ever more informed by their interests in ecological survival, sustainable development and just societies. Accordingly, there is new emphasis on experiential learning, service learning, forms of learning that do not involve formal assessment, learning that occurs off campus, learning that is carried out in partnership with community organisations. This should be further developed and integrated into credit and grading systems and furthered by applied and contextualised pedagogies.

5. Driving Social Transformation

University leadership, in its widest sense, must take greater responsibility for their students and the societies they will form. The litmus test of universities is whether they truly wish to transform their ways and means and engage more forcefully with society by being more analytical and critical of the context in which they operate, from which they receive their funds, and contribute to in turn. Universities are not doing enough to instigate sustainable transformation, address social inequalities and cease perpetuating and reproducing the very conditions underlying these challenges.

Universities, as social institutions, must look at the unbundling of elitism and harness education for the many, and truly influence their moral agency to contribute to the flourishing of society and planetary development.

GET INVOLVED

⊙ **More information about the IAU sessions at WHEC and their recordings are available at the IAU website:**

https://www.iau-aiu.net/IAU-at-UNESCO-WHEC2022

For more information, please contact: Andreas Corcoran at a.corcoran@iau-aiu.net

Internationalization

Internationalization of higher education is an inevitable process in the era of globalization and a deliberate strategy for improving quality and relevance of higher education and research. IAU focuses on the academic rationales, the equitable and collaborative nature of the process and aims to minimize the adverse effects of international interactions when these take place in highly unequal and diverse contexts among HEIs with different resources, needs and interests.

RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO FUTURE SOCIETY

Internationalization of higher education is an evolving concept, sometimes even controversial, as the understanding of its meaning and purpose is not the same in all regions of the world and for all people. Among the different definitions of internationalization of higher education, IAU adopts the following:

"[Internationalization of Higher Education is] the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society." (De Wit, H., Hunter F., Howard L., Egron-Polak E. (Eds.) (2015) "Internationalization of Higher Education", European Parliament, Brussels: EU).

This definition developed seven years ago, updated the definition authored by prof. Knight and now stresses the intentionality of the process and its ultimate scope, i.e. to make a meaningful contribution to society. Seven years have passed since this updated definition yet even if the world has changed quite substantially, this definition remains valid. However, there are pressing questions that should be asked and which call for answers:

- Is internationalization as it is implemented today living up to its definition, i.e. does it make a meaningful contribution to society?
- What is the relevance and value of internationalization to future society?

Internationalization for today's society

The answer to the first question is probably "not really". Too often internationalization has been and is being implemented in a manner that is not identifying societal benefit as its final objective. The examples of implementation of internationalization in ways that are not benefitting the whole society are well known and have been discussed extensively: the predominance of an economic rationale, the many inequalities connected to internationalization (access to opportunities, unequal share of benefits both among countries, institutions and individuals, predominance of some knowledge systems over others, etc.). At the same time, it is important to stress that there are many benefits that internationalization brings to society: the education of new generations of globally- and open-minded graduates, who are better equipped to understand the world's challenges from both a global and
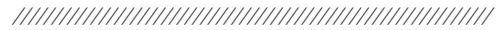
a local perspective, the strengthening of collaboration in research, which lead to tackle more effectively and efficiently the same global challenges, and the share of different views which lead to questioning assumptions and open a critical reflection in our societies.

Whether the glass is half full or half empty depends on the way you look at it. However, today transformations are required for internationalization to live up to the ambitions set out in its definition. It is essential to address the shortcomings of internationalization for internationalization to be relevant for future society.

Internationalization for future society

To answer the second question and to understand the relevance and value of internationalization to future society is essential to first imagine how future society could look like. The first and probably easiest point, is that future society will be faced with increasingly important global challenges. With the growth of the world's population, access to, and use of resources (e.g. water, food, materials, energy) will be even more challenging than it is today. If the current trends continue, climate change will be an even more urgent threat. Global health will be more challenging with the emergence of new pandemics. All these challenges can be solved only through high quality (higher) education that fosters cooperation and solidarity, with a global

approach to research and innovation, and will demand globally minded individuals who are capable to put the global common interest before narrow and usually personal interests.

The second point is linked to whether future society will be a more or less globalised one.

While it is evident why internationalization would be important in a more globalised society, it remains equally important in a less globalised society. This might sound contradictory, but there are two explanations. Firstly, the above-mentioned global challenges will still require global solutions, even where society is less globalised. Secondly, and equally important, is the fact that in a more closed society, where groups of individuals tend to isolate, the risk of rising uncommunicativeness and misunderstanding increases, thus increasing the possibility of conflict. Educating empathetic, global citizens who are able to understand the "other" and who appreciate the value of solidarity is the best prevention for hate, conflict and war.

Whatever future society may look like, internationalization of higher education will remain relevant and of enormous value. However, it has to be implemented according to its definition; it has to be for all, ethical, and societal benefit must be its ultimate goal.

GET INVOLVED

➔ **Planning to revise your internationalization strategy and activities after COVID-19? ISAS (2.0) is there to support you!**

The world has changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new geopolitical reality and the imperative for sustainable development. In this new context, strategies and activities in internationalization need to be revised and rethought.

The process of rethinking internationalization and revising its strategy would enormously benefit from the external expert view offered by IAU's Internationalization Strategy Advisory Services ISAS (2.0).

With different services tailored to the different needs of institutions, ISAS (2.0) offers support to HEIs in their revision of internationalization whatever the nature of the institution and/or the stage of implementation of the institutional internationalization strategy are.

To know more about the experience of HEIs that already undertook an ISAS (2.0) you can read the ISAS impact evaluation study and report (https://iau-aiu.net/IMG/pdf/isas_report-compressed.pdf)

➔ **Plan to take part in the 6th IAU Global Survey on Internationalization of Higher Education!**

Five years after the last edition, IAU has started preparing the sixth edition of the Global Survey on internationalization of higher education.

Over the last months, together with an Advisory Committee of invited experts and representatives from partners and sponsors from all regions of the world, IAU developed the Survey questionnaire and tested it with a pilot group of universities.

The survey will be launched at the beginning of the year 2023.

In order to make the survey a success a high number of replies from different regions of the world is needed, your contribution is essential!

Stay tuned for more detailed information on how to participate in the Global Survey at the beginning of 2023.

For more information, please contact: Giorgio Marinoni at g.marinoni@iau-aiu.net

Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development

Universities play a key role advocating, educating and leading the way for a more sustainable future. For many years, IAU has been fostering actions for sustainability in support of Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals.

RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF UNIVERSITIES FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

In preparation of the 16th IAU General Conference, many IAU Members expressed the need for transformative action towards a more sustainable university – including the work on teaching, research, community engagement, and stronger leadership and advocacy for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. With the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference in May 2022[3], the annual UN High-Level Political Forum in July[4], and the UN Transforming Education Summit[5] in September, these multiple voices are calling governments to act; and not only recognize (higher) education's crucial role in the achievement of the SDGs, but also create policies and structures, including funding, supporting the desired outcomes at the different regional, national and institutional level.

This mandate for HESD is reflected in two particular sections of the concept note for the 16th IAU General Conference. The main questions submitted to the higher education community are:

■ *How do we ensure that universities provide individuals with the knowledge, skills and competences necessary to become the leaders, critical thinkers, systems thinkers, decision-makers, innovators, specialists, teachers and researchers and responsible citizens who will engage in building a better and more sustainable society?*

■ *How does Agenda 2030 for sustainable development strategically help shape the university curriculum?*

While the second question can be answered more practically by for instance aligning SDGs with strategic areas of interest and cross-cutting activities between departments around the goals, the first question might be more complex to respond to. While HEI's societal objective, next to create, foster and transfer knowledge, is to educate the next generation of leaders, enhance thought processes, and sharpen critical awareness. The way to get there is not always linear, and different countries set distinct priorities. This also links closely to the notion of quality assurance and the need to find consensus of what

is understood as quality and what values need to underpin such quality.

To achieve the objectives and values mentioned, the contribution of universities and other formal and informal institutions of learning is of particular relevance. In this context, the IAU HESD work links the different actors and levels to maximize the visibility and opportunities for collaboration and how this helps enhance both quality and relevance of the system and the institutions.

IAU HESD Advocacy

Since the early 1990s, the **IAU advocates for the key role higher education can play for a more sustainable future.** Two IAU Policy Statements translate this commitment:

■ The **IAU Iquitos Statement on Education for Sustainable Development** (drafted in 2014 and adopted in 2016 at the General Conference):
IAU Members commit to build synergies and promote collaboration in favour of sustainable development.

■ The **IAU Kyoto Declaration on Sustainable Development** (drafted and adopted in 1993) :
IAU Members urged all universities worldwide to undertake research and action to achieve sustainable development.

The Association supports and informs the **Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and is part of the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development (ESD for 2030) projects and discussions. Through the strategic thematic priority Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD)[4], IAU promotes a **Whole Institution Approach to SD**, which fosters the incorporation of sustainable development concepts and principles in **all dimensions of universities** – teaching & learning, research, community engagement and campus initiatives. Through engagement with members at events, in-person and online, publications, and providing tools and visibility through the IAU HESD Global Portal, a comprehensive platform collecting and showcasing higher education's actions for sustainable development since 2012, learning opportunities, momentum for change, and positive impact for SD is being updated and developed constantly.

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3. See also IAU Horizons Vol 27, Nr. 1 *"'Reinventing Higher Education for a Sustainable Future'"*: https://www.iau-aiu.net/IAU-Horizons

4. https://www.iau-aiu.net/HESD?onglet=3

5. https://transformingeducationsummit.sdg4education2030.org/

A joint vision, connecting SDGs and exchanging good practices: the IAU HESD Cluster

Since 2018, an important pillar of IAU's HESD work is the **IAU Global HESD Cluster**[6], a unique network of universities engaged with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The dynamics of the IAU HESD Cluster encourage action on the different SDGs by having 16 universities each lead a subcluster of universities from all 5 continents. These subclusters or networks of "satellite" universities develop projects around "their" SDG. The Cluster facilitates cooperation across all continents, peer-to-peer learning, joint events and the sharing best practices for sustainability. Furthermore, the work of IAU HESD Cluster is brought to the attention of multilateral and international organisations or governments through IAU's advocacy work.

During a virtual 3 days Cluster Workshop in March 2022, 81 participants from all world regions took part in very constructive discussions, leading to two main outcome documents:

- A **Statement on the Joint vision from the IAU Higher Education for Sustainable Development (HESD)** Cluster members

- The IAU HESD Cluster **Strategy and Working Plan 2022-2024**

The university leaders and scholars contributing to the IAU HESD Cluster affirmed, amongst other, that value-based higher and further education are essential for making progress towards Agenda 2030; that the SDGs are highly interconnected and thus require more cooperation between the Goals in research, education, community engagement and global partnerships; University work is evidence-based, and trusted stakeholders which contributions and collaboration is needed at all levels. They are key contributors to reach the SDGs; they educate students, citizens and leaders as critical thinkers and change agents. Furthermore, universities shape society by relating academic findings to the real-world issues embedded in the SDGs and, as such, are central actors for a more sustainable future. Last but not least, HEIs distinctly hold the appropriate knowledge and educational methods for the range of literacies, including digital and wellness literacies, needed for SD.

Transforming Higher Education for a more sustainable future

Without a doubt, universities are shaping the present, and will shape society in the future. What the future will look like is yet to be determined. To move towards a sustainable future and make meaningful contributions to the SDGs and beyond 2030, higher education needs to take action and determined leadership will lead the way. Conveying and conversing are the first and most important steps, then partnerships and action need to follow to make results visible. Only together, through constant exchange of ideas and good practices and by jointly making the case for higher education's role for sustainable development, can we identify and develop the much-needed solutions to global challenges, and transform society towards a sustainable future for all.

6. Learn more: https://iau-aiu.net/HESD

GET INVOLVED and support the work done over the last 30+ years

→ **Contribute to the IAU Global Portal on HESD and share your initiatives with the global higher education community!** www.iau-hesd.net

→ **Read the new IAU HESD Cluster Report 2020-2021:** http://iau-hesd.net/sites/default/files/documents/iauhesdcluster_reportactivities2021_final.pdf

→ **Read about IAU's contributions to the UNESCO WHEC 2022** (https://www.iau-aiu.net/IAU-at-UNESCO-WHEC2022) **and to the UN High Level Political Forum 2022** (https://iau-aiu.net/HESD?onglet=3)

→ **Engage with IAU on twitter** @IAU_HESD

For more information, please contact: **Isabel Toman at** contact@iau-hesd.net

Digital Transformation of higher education

ICTs and their impact are ubiquitous in all aspects of higher education worldwide. Yet, for various reasons the inclusion of and the reflection on how best to use ICTs in all functions of higher education is uneven from region to region, from country to country, and among institutions. The aim of IAU's action in this area is to promote the opportunities and discuss the challenges and, through collaboration and exchange, to unlock the potential for all.

MOLDING A HUMANISTIC, INCLUSIVE AND ETHICAL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

"Our historical moment is distinguished by an acceleration of the technological transformation of our societies, characterized by an ongoing digital revolution and advances in biotechnologies and neuroscience. Technological innovations have reshaped the ways we live and learn and are certain to continue doing so."[7]

Opinions and views are multiple when it comes to digital transformation of higher education, with increased reliance on digital technologies during the pandemic further accelerating transformation, generating new experiences, at the same time highlighting both challenges and opportunities. Yet, whether you view digital transformation as positive or not, it is important to recognize what is clearly stated in the quote above, that technological innovations are reshaping the way we live and learn and that these changes are happening at a rapid pace. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to digital transformation, it will inevitably impact and shape the future of higher education.

Digital transformation is a complex topic as it impacts higher education at all levels and is intertwined with other processes. As we saw during the pandemic, it impacts teaching and learning, not only in terms of didactics and pedagogies and the role of the teacher, but also content and curriculum. It concerns research and knowledge generation, both in terms of tools and infrastructures used in the process of scientific advancement, also the means and opportunities for collaboration with peers from around the world, and how data and research outputs are shared and disseminated. Finally, it impacts the overall management of higher education institutions in terms of information and knowledge infrastructure, from staff and student records to how we design physical spaces such as lecture halls, office space, and access them. In other words, digital innovation impacts all aspects of higher education. In brief, this implies that discussing the impact of digital transformation is extremely important for the future of higher education while at the same time being inseparable from other processes of change within higher education institutions.

A second layer of complexity is added by the inherent contradictions that come with digital innovation and technologies. For example, it is thanks to digital innovation that we can today connect and exchange with colleagues and peers from around the world, yet at the same time it is this innovation that generates further divides and inequalities between those who have access to devices, connection and data, necessary digital literacy skills and those who do not. Digital infrastructure allows us to manage and disseminate information in new ways that are more transparent, that can inform decision-making, but at the same time it raises important issues of data and information security, ethical questions about data ownership and privacy, and it tends to increase a higher education institution's dependency on private companies offering digital solutions and platform management services. So, while digital innovation brings new opportunities and solutions, it is accompanied by new challenges and risks.

There are no easy nor absolute solutions when shaping digital transformation in higher education, and the direction and priorities are furthermore guided by national policies and priorities as well as availability of resources.

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7. UNESCO Report – Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education, 2021 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707.locale=en

At the IAU, one of the core activities has been to propose a new policy statement on digital transformation and the result of this collaborative process will be presented to the IAU 16th General Conference. The purpose of the statement is to outline key principles and values that must underpin any digital transformation. While transformation may vary from one institution to another, it is crucial to have conversations about the normative aspects as a means to outline joint ambitions and challenges to be solved regardless of the different contexts in which digital transformation takes place. When we discuss relevance and value(s) of higher education to future society, one of the core quests before us is to discuss how we wish to mold the digital future.

The IAU policy statement is entitled *Transforming Higher Education in a Digital World for the Global Common Good*. It was agreed that it was essential to convey the message that higher education is continuously transforming, that it has to at the same time shape and adapt to an increasingly digital world. Digital transformation is a process – a means to an end – and therefore it is vital to stress that its purpose should guide any actions. For the purpose of the statement, we chose to focus on the *Global Common Good* as a shared aim across countries. This reflects the will and commitment to harnessing the potential of digital transformation for the good of humanity, to ensure that it contributes to enhancing access as well as contributing to increasing the quality of higher education whether in teaching and learning or in research, and at the same time recognizing and addressing associated risks.

This aim of the policy statement aligns with the overarching message conveyed in the UNESCO Report[7], in the *Roadmap of the 3rd UNESCO World Higher Education Conference* and within the discourse around the UN *Transforming Education Summit*, namely to reaffirm higher education as an integral part of the right to education and a public good that contributes to global common good of humanity. The policy statement is divided into six sections, each one highlighting an area that requires specific attention; I look briefly at two areas below to underline such areas where universities can play an active role in shaping our future.

Innovation in teaching and learning can contribute to offering a more diversified range of learning opportunities, thereby also catering to the different needs of learners and pursuing the aim of making higher education available to all, to share Open Educational Resources (OERs) as a means to generate knowledge commons. The UNESCO Report[7] includes a projection that *"high income-countries could reach 100% participation rates as early as 2034, while middle income countries will be reaching between 60% and 80% participation rates in 2050. On the other hand, higher education participation rates in lower middle-income counties will only reach some 35% by 2050, and less than 15% low-income countries"*. This is one example of the significant inequalities before us and one can imagine how this will impact the future of societies around the world. While digital innovation is not a panacea to solving these

structural problems, it is our duty to explore how it can make a meaningful contribution to addressing inequalities.

Over the past 30 years, we have seen an important change in terms of opportunities that digital innovation and infrastructure provide when it comes to generating, storing and sharing research data and findings. The IAU policy statement connects to the *UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (OS)*, that defines OS as *"an inclusive construct that combines various movements and practices aiming to make multilingual scientific knowledge openly available, accessible and reusable for everyone, to increase scientific collaborations and sharing of information for the benefits of science and society…"*[8]

It is far from simple to rewire the entire ecosystem of science. Such changes are entangled with dominant traditions and cultures, both in terms of academic publishing, research assessments and properties and competition. Yet, we have new means to open up and share data and research outcomes which can benefit not only the research community, but also citizens at large. This is likewise an important movement where universities must take a proactive – rather than reactive – role in defining this process and how we build and share knowledge as an essential part of future societies.

These are examples of the important issues on the agenda when it comes to digital transformation of higher education. Beyond the IAU policy statement, digital transformation also forms part of the key priorities outlined in the next IAU strategic plan. It is essential that we (the international higher education community) continue to work together to debate and define challenges, explore solutions, address inequalities and to nurture intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding in the quest of molding our digital future.

By supporting the transformation of higher education in a digital world for the global common good based on the principles laid out in this statement, we share the ambition of exploring the potential of digital transformation for the good of humanity, while addressing its risks, regardless of the different forms that this transformation may take from one institution to another. By doing so, we will be able to build bridges rather than divides in an interconnected world.

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8. UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science 2021: https://en.unesco.org/science-sustainable-future/open-science/recommendation

GET INVOLVED

⊙ **Access the IAU Policy Statement** on the IAU website on the dedicated IAU at WHEC 2022 page: https://iau-aiu.net/IAU-at-UNESCO-WHEC2022
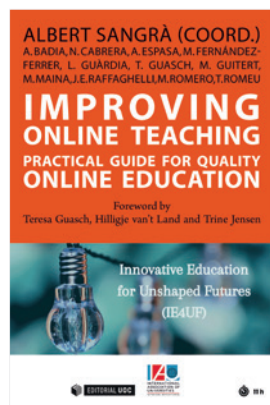
For more information, please contact: Trine Jensen at t.jensen@iau-aiu.net

IAU STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

IAU KNOWLEDGE HUB

New IAU Publications

Improving online teaching. Practical guide for quality online education

IAU is pleased to launch this publication in collaboration with UOC (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya). In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the rapid shift to online learning, the UOC prepared this publication, originally in Spanish, with the aim to share their experience in online learning. IAU partnered with UOC to make the handbook available in English to share it with a much broader audience in addition to a joint webinar series on this topic. The handbook presents a series of proposals to improve online education and to be able to face future situations where face-to-face education may be interrupted. The Handbook is a support tool for all education professionals who wish to understand and explore the transformative potential of online education. It is likewise useful for those who wishes to develop hybrid or blended solution and better understand the specificities of online learning. The publication can be downloaded free of charge: https://openaccess.uoc.edu/bitstream/10609/122307/3/9788491809371_nonsale.pdf

Higher Education Policy

HEP 35/2 – June 2022

Higher Education Policy (HEP 35/2 – June 2022) presents a collection of papers that looks at, amongst others; job satisfaction among Italian PhD holders; conflict of interest in university accreditation in Chile; perceptions and experiences of female academics with diversity policies in Belgium; institutional autonomy and capacity of higher education governance in South Asia; and how academics feel about, and respond, to reforms in Cyprus.

HEP 35/3 – September 2022

The September issue of HEP is a special edition entitled '**Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education: Policy Implications for Student Mobility, Teaching and Learning, Research and University Governance'**. Articles look at how COVID-19 would drive digitalization, innovations, and crisis management of higher education; quality assurance where HE moved online; how Chinese students evaluate overseas studies during and in the post-COVID-19 crisis; the impact of the pandemic on Indian higher education; how HEIs respond to the crisis and communicate their response to the crisis to campus stakeholders; the effects that COVID-19 restrictions have had and are having on the lives of international students; and how the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the Australian university system.

https://link.springer.com/journal/41307/volumes-and-issues

5th IAU Global Survey on the Internationalization of Higher Education: Analysis of the Responses of Higher Education Institutions in the Francophonie

Following the publication by the International Association of Universities (IAU) in September 2019 of the report of the 5th Global Survey on the Internationalization of Higher Education, IAU and the Academy for Research and Higher Education (ARES) joined forces to conduct a comparative analysis of the global trends observed within the Francophonie (francophone university community), in the broadest sense: Respondents come from both Francophone institutions (institutions where French is the official language of instruction and assessment) and Francophile institutions (institutions with a demonstrated affinity for French).

The report highlights the points of divergence between the trends of the target group (Francophonie) and the overall global or regional trends as reported in the IAU report, or between the two sub-groups (Francophone and Francophile) that make up the Francophonie sample. The analysis is based on a sample of 254 respondents. The report is available in French only: https://www.iau-aiu.net/IMG/pdf/enquete_aiu-ares_all-compressed-2.pdf

IAU WORLD HIGHER EDUCATION DATABASE (WHED)
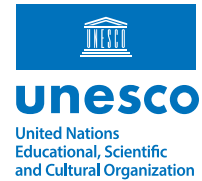
A UNIQUE GLOBAL REFERENCE PORTAL, FREELY ACCESSIBLE ONLINE

The IAU's **World Higher Education Database** (WHED) is a unique reference portal, freely available online, that lists authoritative information on accredited higher education institutions (HEIs) in some 196 countries and territories, and provides comprehensive information on these countries' education systems and credentials.

As the WHED only includes officially verified information provided by national competent bodies (Ministries, HE Commissions, UNESCO Delegations etc.) it is regarded as a trusted source of information on accredited HEIs. It is continuously updated and currently lists some 20,000 HEIs from 196 countries and territories, and the number of HEIs is growing each year. **It is unique in that it is the only official source of information on HEIs at the global level**; is maintained **in collaboration with UNESCO**.

Ultimately, the mission of the WHED is to facilitate a more fluid circulation of knowledge, talent and exchange while fostering global trust in HE systems.

RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF THE WHED TO FUTURE SOCIETY

The WHED and the digitalisation of higher education

In 2019, IAU introduced a system of **unique identifiers – the Global WHED ID** – for each HEI listed in the WHED to help facilitate identification and thus recognition more easily. This unique code has gained additional importance in the digitalisation of higher education. It is essential for the clear and unambiguous identification of accredited HEIs. Its relevance and functionality have received a lot of attention within the higher education field of data provision and credentials.

It is a key resource for the realisation of the **UNESCO** *Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education* and its aim to facilitate academic and professional mobility.

The **Global WHED ID** can be easily integrated and used in new technologies for recognition and quality assurance purposes as well as **digital services world-wide**. This unique identifier

has been integrated into HR systems, student tracking and applications systems, and used by researchers to track the expansion and trends in higher education.

The integration of WHED Data: verifiable credentials and blockchain technology

The future of the WHED relies on enhanced interoperability and its capacity to harmoniously integrate its data in and across the systems of HE stakeholders.

As the only global database that provides unique identifiers and degree information for all accredited HEIs, the WHED is expected to play an important role in the digitalisation of the qualification recognition process, in part through verifiable credentials and blockchain technology.

Blockchain, for one, is a digital register by which transactions in crypto-currencies are recorded chronologically and publicly. This technology allows the sharing of certified and verifiable qualifications while minimising fraud. The qualification holder is the sole owner of the information and the cryptographic key that allows access to the data stored on blockchain aim to preserve privacy and data agency. The data stored on the blockchain is immutable and cannot be modified. Access to the information stored on the blockchain from a certified source allows direct verification of the authenticity of the qualification.

IAU partners with the Italian recognition agency CIMEA to apply this technology to provide users with a secure wallet to store their academic certificates (Diploma application), the information on HEIs is verified against WHED data.

The relevance and value of WHED to future society is clear: WHED is a major player that authorities, higher education providers, and students will benefit from, especially through the use of its data for recognition and quality assurance, and growing digital services worldwide.

For more information, please contact: Andreas Corcoran at a.corcoran@iau-aiu.net and see whed.net

IAU Membership News

NEW MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

AUSTRALIA
Murdoch University
www.murdoch.edu.au

AZERBAIDJAN
Mingachevir State University
www.mdu.edu.az

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
The College of Service Business
https://vub.edu.ba/

CAMBODIA
Preah Sihamoniraja Buddhist University
www.psbu.edu.kh

CANADA
University of Calgary
http://www.ucalgary.ca

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
Higher Institut of Commerce of Kisangani
www.isckis.ac.cd

FRANCE
University Paris 8– Vincennes – Saint-Denis
www.univ-paris8.fr

HAÏTI
Université de Technologie d'Haïti
www.unitech.edu.ht

INDIA
Nims University
www.nimsuniversity.org

INDIA
GNA University
www.gnauniversity.edu.in

INDIA
Symbiosis International University (Deemed University)
https://siu.edu.in/

INDIA
Reva University
www.reva.edu.in

IRAQ
Duhok Polytechnic University
https://www.dpu.edu.krd/

ITALY
University of Padua
http://www.unipd.it

LIBYA
Attahadi Medical Al-Ahlia University
(Attahadi University)
www.attahadi.edu.ly

MALAYSIA
International Islamic University Malaysia
https://www.iium.edu.my/v2/

MEXICO
Technologic University of Aguascalientes
www.utags.edu.mx

NIGERIA
University of Abuja
https://www.uniabuja.edu.ng/

PORTUGAL
University of Coimbra
http://www.uc.pt

SWITZERLAND
University of Lucerne
www.unilu.ch

TÜRKIYE
Dokuz Eylul University
https://www.deu.edu.tr

URUGUAY
Universidad de la República
udelar.edu.uy

USA
Francis Marion University
https://www.fmarion.edu/

USA
The Chicago School of Professional
Psychology
www.thechicagoschool.edu

ZIMBABWE
Women's University in Africa
www.wua.ac.zw

ORGANIZATION

FINLAND
UArctic (University of the Arctic)
www.uarctic.org

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IAU KNOWLEDGE HUB

IN FOCUS
Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society

by **Trine Jensen**, Manager, HE & Digital Transformation, Publication and Events & **Andreas Corcoran**, Deputy Secretary General

The 'In Focus' section is devoted to the theme of the IAU 16th General Conference: *Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society*.

The conference offers a forum to reflect on universities' function in society and their contribution to building a sustainable and inclusive future. It also asks in what ways universities need to change to be more transformative in effect. Beyond the idea of change, it also provides a place for reflection about what needs to be preserved or valued to uphold the very idea of the university in society.

Authors from all regions of the world, representing different institutions and organizations, have accepted this bold challenge of outlining what they believe is essential for the future of universities. The collection of articles brings together a variety of different perspectives, ideas and challenges. It presents priorities and solutions from multiple angles, yet what they all share is the unwavering belief that universities constitute an essential pillar in society.

The first articles address the theme of relevance and value of universities to future society on a conceptual level. This is complemented by a series of institutional experiences in the second part.

The articles ask what is the essence of a university in society and make proposals as to what needs to change in this rapidly transforming context. They question a growing trend in society and in institutions themselves that measures the relevance of higher education in econometric terms, underlining the detrimental long-term consequences of short-term policy measures. The issue of financing is present in several pieces - in some more latent than others – acutely demonstrating how the financial situation of universities also impacts the possibilities and capacities to transform.

Other authors look at transformations outside of the university walls, calling for urgent change to unsustainable modes of living and overexploitation of natural resources in today's societies. Universities are called to rethink their modes of education and research agendas to empower citizens to address the grand challenges of our world.

These discussions are complemented by a series of examples that showcase how individual organizations and institutions implemented change at the institutional level in a bid to ensure that higher education remains relevant and of value to society.

This series of 22 articles assembles important insights into current priorities and challenges. They demonstrate the complex and intertwined processes that take place simultaneously and contribute to the continuous shaping of higher education. They offer thought-provoking perspectives and warn us that the overarching value of higher education in society reveals itself in demonstrating not only what universities are good at, but what they are good for. Although the challenges and solutions may be different from one institution to another, from one country to another, the collection of these diverse voices gives us ample indication of what is at stake for the future of higher education.

We sincerely thank all authors for accepting to share their thoughts, insights, and ambitions and their belief in higher education as an essential component of society, one that has withstood the test of time but is constantly exposed to challenges and change; one that is rooted in a set of values and traditions that remain relevant over time, in a fast-changing and interconnected world.

IN FOCUS

01 Reimagining our Futures Together: Implications for Higher Education

*by **António Nóvoa**, Professor, University of Lisbon, Portugal and Chair of the research-drafting committee of the UNESCO International Commission on the Futures of Education*

> ❝ Universities are institutions unlike any other. Their strength and usefulness lie precisely in this *difference*. The day they lose their specificity, allowing themselves to be governed by market rules or commodification trends, they will become useless. A "narrow profit-focused education" and "education based mainly on profitability in the global market" would lead to the end of universities. ❞

The entry point of the last UNESCO Report – *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education* – is *human rights*, education as a human right, but also the role of education in promoting human rights. The public nature of education, and of higher education, is central to the Report in connection with education as a common good.

Following Martha Nussbaum's reflection we must resist efforts to reduce education to a tool of the gross national product. Therefore, we need to bring together the concepts of the *public* and the *common*. Public education educates the public. The emphasis on participation and citizenship is what strengthens education as a common good. The Report is built around the idea of education as a collective act of co-creation and co-construction.

Universities are institutions unlike any other. Their strength and usefulness lie precisely in this *difference*. The day they lose their specificity, allowing themselves to be governed by market rules or commodification trends, they will become useless. A "narrow profit-focused education" and "education based mainly on profitability in the global market" would lead to the end of universities.

That is why reimagining the futures implies preserving higher education on its own terms. Universities exist in a different time, not the frenzy of productivism, entrepreneurship, immediate results, short-term profit making. Their time is different, it is one to cultivate doubt, to mature thought, to develop imagination, to build participation, to address complexity.

One of the most absurd and damaging trends of recent decades is the idea that there is a single university model, induced by uniform rankings, that all institutions should seek to emulate. Universities need to develop their own projects, based on their histories, roots and missions. A global standardization is detrimental to many countries and regions, particularly in Africa and Asia.

The UNESCO Report attaches the utmost importance to higher education. To say this is to make the most obvious, and yet most revolutionary statement: universities are educational institutions. Strangely, today, little is said about education in universities, about pedagogy, students and their lives, professors as teachers, little is said about what is the essence of a university.

It is necessary to insist on the importance of linking higher education and basic education. Because the future of basic education largely depends on universities. Because the future of universities largely depends on basic education. Of course, there is the very relevant issue of teacher education, which universities are responsible for. But this link must go much further, become a transversal element that cuts across the entire university world – scientists, scholars, academics – in all areas.

That is why one of the central points of the UNESCO Report addresses knowledge and science. The internal reorganization of universities must be in line with the "convergence revolution" and the need for cross-disciplinary research.

The idea of the *knowledge commons* runs through the entire Report, as well as science, innovation and technological developments, but also knowledge as culture, open science, shared science, citizen science. In a world of denialism and fake news, and so many attacks on human rights, we need the presence of science in society and politics. We also need to value scientific literacy in schools. It is crucial that science asserts itself as a pillar of our common lives.

Universities and science can do much more than they sometimes realize. Let us be bold and ambitious. For the International Commission, this ambition translates into a new social contract for education, into new pathways for higher education.

Internally, universities must change fundamentally, especially in regard to their relationship with society. Universities must be ecosystems for innovation and citizenship, intertwined with cities and democratic participation.

We cannot forget that some of the main historical contributions of higher education have been the student struggles and academic endeavor for freedom, for gender equality, for the protection of the planet, for the cause of diversity, for de-colonization, to overcome discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion.

IN FOCUS

Externally, a new social contract means a consideration of education as a global common good. This entails a global solidarity, and new investments, and the clear understanding that education, like health, is a global responsibility.

This Report is not a conventional report, a blueprint, a closed document. On the contrary, it is an open document, which results from the consultation of one million people worldwide, and which aims to mobilize many more in the years to come. We need a massive commitment to social dialogue, to thinking and acting *together*. This is the main message of the UNESCO Report which ends with an invitation to think and imagine our common futures.

In the case of higher education, we are talking about 250 million students all over the world. It is a huge population of young people, and adults, who can bring hope for change. For that, we need courage and boldness. The biggest risk for universities is not taking risks.

This text consists of excerpts from the keynote address given at the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (Barcelona, 18 May 2022).

02 Building Global Networks of Scholars to Address Humanity's Grand Challenges

by **Ahmed Bawa**, *Chief Executive Officer, Universities South Africa (USAf), South Africa*

Not infrequently, universities must reimagine themselves and their relationship with society as all kinds of internal and external pressures are brought to bear on them. This isn't surprising considering that they are located within political economies by which they are shaped and reshaped. Having said this, their purpose in multilayered democracies and economies are both internally and externally contested; hence their need for ongoing, diverse interactions with all segments of society to enhance their social ownership. Twenty years into the new millennium, another moment of reimagination is upon them.

We've seen this in the past. Globalization and its instruments like the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) had vast implications for higher education and consolidated an era of rampant corporatization. In 2010, Bill Readings' posthumously published, *The University in Ruins*, drew its inspiration from the impact of this moment on the purpose and role of research intensive universities in the USA and Canada and the undermining of the capacity of these institutions to sustain the core purposes of the university as a social institution. Snatching at this opportunity, many universities in the Global

> ❝ These grand challenges are simultaneously local and global. They call out for solutions that draw on knowledge enterprises that are locally and globally connected; that draw on the construction of research and teaching networks and partnerships across the world; and that depend on and contribute to the emergence of global commons of scholars and scholarship. ❞

North scrambled to position themselves for the bounty of expanding student markets. In the Global South this neo-liberal construction produced the possibility of stymied decolonisation processes and, perhaps more insidiously, recolonization.

Now universities face new challenges, new opportunities, to reimagine themselves as they find themselves in new complex contexts. The extent to which this occurs will depend on the courage of university leaders, theorists and practitioners to dig deep and to confront the extent to which universities are playing the kinds of roles expected of them. It is also a moment for universities to measure their complicity in producing the conditions we have arrived at as humanity.

What has changed in the environment? Humanity is grappling with what may be referred to as grand challenges: from global warming to food and health security, from growing geopolitical inequalities to rising political violence. These challenges have representation at both the local and global scale.

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic acts as a socioeconomic bellwether as it signals deep, seemingly irreparable fractures in our societies driven by deep levels of poverty and vast inequalities – within nations and between them. In South Africa, at the most fundamental level, we are witnessing profound questions about the nature of the relationship between democratic political systems and their seeming inability to produce a better quality of life for their citizens. In many parts of the world, we are witnessing a growing distrust of democracy. Perhaps of most consequence, is what seems like an inexorable slide towards anti-intellectualism, the steady loss of public trust in experts, the rise of populism in many parts of the world and its attack on use of evidence in policymaking. These phenomena speak to the future of universities and their relationship with society.

The pandemic also exposes the fragility of global geopolitics as governments jockey for position as global champions (or villains) of one sort or the other. It was an electrifying moment of opportunity for the nations of the world to work together to solve the challenges posed by a devastating pandemic. We failed. And this has been further accelerated with the geopolitical fallout of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

We have also witnessed an accelerated unleashing of the use of technology in teaching and learning with complex

implications for higher education. We witness day-by-day the transformational power of the digital technologies being integrated in the core functions of institutions of higher learning. We also bear witness to vast changes in the labour markets and their implications for the nature of universities and their programmes. Again, this presents both opportunities and risks with societies having to grapple with the potential for further socioeconomic fracturing with the possibility of large employee layoffs.

There is growing concern in many higher education systems of the impact of the economic downturn on the sustainability of the sector. And perhaps, associated with this is the underperformance of higher education in some societies in providing access to higher learning to large swathes of the population. The participation rate of 18- to 24-year-olds in Sub-Saharan Africa is at about the 8% level – way below the global average.

These are large, powerful provocations which universities as social institutions must grapple with as they revisit their role in addressing these challenges through their knowledge intensive mandates. In the process, they must work towards developing social compacts that help to shape dynamic relationships between society and institution. These grand challenges are simultaneously local and global. They call out for solutions that draw on knowledge enterprises that are locally and globally connected; that draw on the construction of research and teaching networks and partnerships across the world; and that depend on and contribute to the emergence of global commons of scholars and scholarship.

Universities are bridges between societies that can allow for the free flow of ideas, knowledge and information. They must occupy this space if humanity is to address the grand challenges facing it.

03 Universities in a Warming World

by **Keri Facer**, *Professor of Educational and Social Futures, University of Bristol, UK and Visiting Professor in Education for Sustainable Development, University of Gothenburg, Sweden*

There are some realities it is time for us to face:

First, that climate change is not a future problem but a present reality, and that we are already seeing its effects around the world and in our own countries in terms of extreme weather, food shortages, conflict, rising prices. Second, that trying to limit its worse effects and create conditions where we can

begin to regenerate our damaged ecosystems will take more than science and technology: it will require philosophers and artists, social scientists and educators, historians and designers working together to extricate our societies from fossil fuel dependency. Third, that universities – as educators of millions of people worldwide, as guardians of important stores of collective common knowledge, as engines of experimentation and innovation - have a critical role to play in helping societies and students to imagine and create new ways of living that repair our world.

It is time for us in universities to step up.

We need to recognise this moment as the civilisation-changing predicament that it is and act accordingly. We also need to recognise our ecological crisis as a symptom of the much deeper vulnerabilities and failings of a civilisation that we have, in universities, done much to create and sustain: a civilisation dependent upon increasing consumption year-on-year, dependent on moving people and goods around the planet, dependent on intensifying the capacity to exploit land and people for ever greater profit and extraction.

Just as Humboldt looked at a rapidly changing world and saw the need for a completely new form of university in the early 19th century, fuelling the Enlightenment project and giving us many of the university forms we recognise today, so, we too need to look at the world around us and ask – what form of university is adequate to these times?

There will, clearly, be no single answer to this question. The new universities that will be capable of confronting and addressing the scale of transformation required will take different forms in different places. But, we can assume that they will have a number of key features:

They will be informed by a core principle of recognising **interdependence:** The new universities will start from the assumption that the world, its problems and its beauties, are complex and interdependent; that the old analogies of clockwork and computing fail to grasp the living inter-relationships of the worlds systems. Universities capable of grasping this complexity will actively educate students as interdisciplinary thinkers, actively foster environments in which multi-perspectival thinking can take root and create

> **Just as Humboldt looked at a rapidly changing world and saw the need for a completely new form of university in the early 19th century, fuelling the Enlightenment project and giving us many of the university forms we recognise today, so, we too need to look at the world around us and ask – what form of university is adequate to these times?**

new analyses and understanding of our complex world. At the heart of such practices will lie a new conception of the student. Just as the 'disciplined student' emerged from Enlightenment institutions, so the 'interdependent student' will emerge in institutions responding to climate change as a complex material, systemic and intellectual phenomenon. Courses will be designed around students understood as interdependent with planetary ecological processes, social infrastructures and other beings.

A new conception of higher education will emerge that defines the state of being educated as precisely the capacity to live well, creatively and responsibility in conditions of interdependence.

They will be **situated and rooted**: The new universities will recognise the limits of academic knowledge as a comprehensive tool for describing and understanding the world, and seek out forms of knowledge and practice in their communities to complement it. They will recognise their partiality and provisionality, understand the strengths and the constraints of the knowledge that they offer and learn from and with knowledge traditions embodied in the communities and societies outside their walls.

The material operations of the university will become a focus of ethical and research attention. A new and lively concern with how universities buy things, employ people, build buildings, generate traffic, shape cities and towns, will be characteristic. The university as civic body, as anchor institution, as employer and purchaser, will be seen as a critical means of supporting communities to shift towards regenerative rather than extractive modes of life and work.

They will take a **holistic perspective**: Finally, the new universities will recognise that confronting civilisational disruption and change will require not merely a clear intellect, but the capacity to confront, recognise and work with difficult emotions as well as the ability to build relationships with others to effect practical change on the ground. The education of 'head, heart and hands' will become a priority, rebalancing a university education in favour of a holistic conception of the capabilities required to live well in a changing world.

It is beyond time now for new forms of Higher Education to emerge. Some universities are beginning that task, asking fundamental questions about who they are educating and for what purposes today. Outside universities, other educational forms are emerging (consider the Ecoversities network) who are attracting students and partners around the world. Those universities wedded to business as usual may stumble on for a while, but their capacity to adequately address the world we are living in today will be diminished. When times change, universities change. And the times are changing.

04 A Still Small Voice
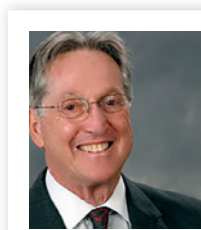
by **Sheldon Rothblatt**, *Professor Emeritus, University of California – Berkeley, USA*

As an undergraduate reading history, I immersed myself in the writings of that crabby Victorian Scot Thomas Carlyle. How, I was asked by a favorite professor, did I survive all that shouting? Apparently well enough, although as I reflect upon the universities and colleges that I have known or in which I have taught, I wonder when the shouting is likely to stop. I am thinking particularly of the large research-led university, described in 1963 by President Clark Kerr of the University of California as a "multiversity." Himself a Quaker, he actually idealized Quaker Swarthmore College where he had been an undergraduate.

However, the American liberal arts college of today is not exactly less noisy. It is as much touched by angry controversies as the larger institutions: diversity politics, whether higher education can or should directly address social problems, whether knowledge is "value free," whether merit-based admissions are possible or desirable (the uneven nature of preparatory schooling is one cause of this problem), whether buildings should be renamed when unsavory details regarding donors are revealed, whether free speech actually exists or ought to exist, "pronoun" issues – is it necessary to list more?

Any national higher education system today encourages shouting precisely because it is tasked to do so much. A commonplace observation is that universities and colleges have never been more central to more people and institutions than at any other time in its history. One result, especially with respect to multiversities, is that they appear to have little internal cohesion – Kerr's point – none of that "integrity" that Cardinal Newman explained in his classic writings. Hence the commotion, born of competing demands and responses. The internal differentiation of the multiversity, its division into innumerable quasi-independent units, programmes, schools, departments, institutes, centers and laboratories, (meioses vaguely anticipated in the medieval period with "faculties," "nations" and "colleges"), suggests a certain anarchy, each segment marketing its wares. Questions legitimately arise as to the uses of its various income streams, for the multiversity must spend on bureaucratic support. Non-academic staff are required for every operation, and staff need space and like to hold meetings. I watched bureaucratic impersonality grow at Berkeley from the days when it was possible to walk into the office of a dean unannounced and receive a warm reception, attentive hearing and respectable sherry. Colleagues everywhere mention the same loss. A necessary expansion makes the multiversity also imperialistic, pushing its original boundaries into adjoining territories, adding to urban congestion and

> **The university was founded to take an active role in the world. It may be instrumental, but the issue is not problem-solving per se but whether the resolution of practical issues is made a partisan and ideological cause. In one unique way the university at its best actually does not resemble the irate society outside. It is the only institution in modern society that has accuracy and truth as its fundamental driver. Beneath all the commotion the core of the university is an on-going interaction or dialectic between received and new knowledge and the evidence required of each.**

antagonizing circumjacent neighborhoods. I will try to restrain myself from inveighing against the corruption of high-cost competitive sports and absurdly overpaid athletics staff.

There is no need to press the point any further. The more involved is an educational institution with its society, the more the institution will import the discordant hullabaloo outside. In *Magister Ludi: The Glass Bead Game*, Hermann Hesse described an intellectual community of detached intellectuals struggling to regain and regenerate the esoteric high culture lost to the world.

But the university was never a monastic hideaway. How to serve is what the noise is all about. The university was founded to take an active role in the world. It may be instrumental, but the issue is not problem-solving per se but whether the resolution of practical issues is made a partisan and ideological cause. In one unique way the university at its best actually does not resemble the irate society outside. It is the only institution in modern society that has accuracy and truth as its fundamental driver. Beneath all the commotion the core of the university is an on-going interaction or dialectic between received and new knowledge and the evidence required of each.

This is not wishful thinking but an emphasis. However much the university/multiversity "serves" its patrons, it remains a place of remarkable stimulation and fertile invention. And it is precisely because its boundaries are porous that its internal differentiation makes room for creative talent from all existing arenas of modern society, talent that delights in being in places where the open exchange of ideas is the rule. All rules are broken, but the capacity of the university to correct itself should not be underestimated. However, one can never be smug. Only in a free society can any ideal of knowledge ultimately dominate.

But where is the source of all knowledge ultimately to be found? An extraordinary episode in the story of the prophet Elijah as told in *King's* offers an essential clue. Knowledge cannot be found where the sounds are loudest, not in terrifying windstorms nor in earthquakes nor infernos. Knowledge resides

in a "still, small voice." The still small voice of the university is the simple fact that knowing something is what the academic enterprise is all about. That in turn requires the kind of beneficial perversity of which academics are capable, namely humility. There is always too much to know. We can expect the future to be as shrill as now, but nothing requires scholars and scientists to rock and roll.

Operating along so many dimensions, the multiversity has room for its original contract with society. Knowledge pursued according to the disciplined canons of truth-seeking is the one thing needful. It is what provides the elusive integrity for which Kerr yearned. Or, to be excused for piling on the literary allusions, Geoffrey Chaucer's *clerc* of Oxenford had it right: gladly would he learn and gladly teach. Thomas Carlyle (true: not always in good odor) would probably agree if only he could stop shouting.

05 The Transformation of Education? – Four Desiderata Critical to Real Change
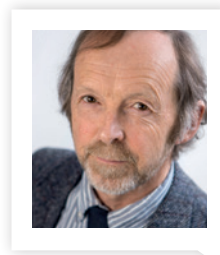
by **Stephen Sterling**, *Emeritus Professor of Sustainability Education, University of Plymouth and IAU Senior Fellow*

What exactly is 'transformation'? This fundamental question seemed to be insufficiently addressed in the extensive discussions which led up to the recent UN Transforming Education Summit (TES). Yet if we cannot achieve clarity on this central concept, the likelihood of the radical change in educational thinking, policy and practice that the Summit advocated seems slim.

Launched by UN Secretary-General, a pre-Summit concept note stated that it was 'aimed at mobilizing action, ambition, solidarity and solutions with a view to transforming education between now, 2030 and beyond' [1].

Global concern has grown exponentially against the background of Covid 19, the climate and ecological crisis, and threats to wellbeing and a safe future, and this reality is galvanising an unprecedented level of re-thinking about the role of education. The TES was perhaps the biggest global discussion to date on the nature and role of education and its value to future society.

> **The concept of transformation implies critical examination of dominant assumptions, values, purposes, and practices. It cannot mean a sincere but ineffectual tweaking of 'business as usual.'**

The ensuing discussion could potentially affect a profound and much needed shift in the trajectory of educational thinking and practice. The Summit followed the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (WHEC) in May which aimed at 'reshaping ideas and practices in higher education to ensure sustainable development for the planet and humanity.' So certainly, re-thinking is in the air.

Yet, I have serious concerns about whether the discourse is sufficiently imaginative and commensurate with the severity of the global situation and the unstable futures that young people are inheriting. I offer here some brief reflections on four interlinked 'desiderata' or needs which – depending on how well they are addressed in the coming months – will affect the success or otherwise of the international 'transformation' movement.

1. Being strategic

The International Commission on the Futures of Education report *Reimagining our futures together* (2021) states, 'education is not yet fulfilling its promise to help us shape peaceful, just, and sustainable futures'. This begs key questions, not least: *why* this is the case? And more critically: how far has education to date contributed to – rather than ameliorated – the global crises now playing out?

Changing a system – an institution, or entire national educational system – requires three elements: Critique, Vision, and Design, as follows:

i. Critique – what is the state of play?

What is wrong or problematic with current thinking, policy and practice in education such that transformation is now seen as necessary? What causes inertia? This tended to be underplayed in the TES documentation, but it is vital if we are to understand the necessary direction and possibility of transformation. I have argued for some years that the fundamental issue is at heart paradigmatic in nature and concerns the dominant values and assumptions that inform secondary and tertiary policy and practice. The reductionist and mechanistic intellectual tradition, overlain by the instrumental view of education advanced by the neoliberal agenda, commodification, and the Global Education Industry has led to a narrowing of purpose and practice in the service of the globalised economy for some decades. By contrast, the rising agenda now is about regeneration, restoration, and resilience in ecosystems, in economies which work within planetary boundaries, and in education and is aimed towards becoming experiential, inclusive, explorative, and creative in building a safer future for all.

ii. Vision – where do we need to be (and by when)?

This second element concerns the philosophical and visionary bases that should inform transformation. Without a strong understanding of the basis of a practicable and remedial

alternative, there is a real danger of going no further than a greening of 'business as usual' in higher education.

Current conditions of complexity, existential threat and systemic crises necessitate the urgent embrace of an ecological or holistic paradigm, founded on relationality. This provides theoretical and valuative underpinning to a whole institutional and cultural shift in the societal mindset to embrace such elements as cross campus synergies, inter- and transdisciplinarity, knowledge diversity, ethical discourse, the cultivation of agency, participatory pedagogies, critical community engagement and localisation, commitment to collectivity, wellbeing and the public good.

iii. Design – how do we effect systemic change?

What strategies, shifts in policy, and changes in pedagogy can facilitate transformation, and what indicators evidence transformation? Here, decision makers need to embrace theories of systemic institutional change and organisational learning which bring a whole systems perspective to bear on purpose, planning and action.

2. Recognising the double learning challenge

The concept of transformation implies critical examination of dominant assumptions, values, purposes, and practices. It cannot mean a sincere but ineffectual tweaking of 'business as usual.' There is an inseparable relationship between learning and transformation, which is illuminated by Gregory Bateson's seminal distinction between learning levels – first order (conformative), second order (reformative), and third order learning (transformative). The latter implies deep learning at individual and organisational level constituting a shift of episteme or paradigm. UNESCO has often stated that education should be transformative and thereby help facilitate social transformation. Yet such agency is critically dependent on prior deep learning and change in educational systems – a daunting but necessary and double-layered learning challenge.

3. Increasing response-ability

The sufficiency of the response of education institutions to the sustainability agenda depends on their ability to learn and change – that is, their 'response-*ability*.' Broadly, universities have taken one of four approaches to the sustainability agenda:

ii. little, or *no response*
iii. *accommodation* (conformative)
iv. *adaptation* (reformative/transitional), and
v. *reframing/re-design* (transformative).

This is a spectrum of increasing challenge, and it is fair to suggest that most institutions still remain in the first two categories. Yet, organisational learning is becoming more evident

as universities seek to increase their response-ability as driven by the human and planetary predicament and by the rising voice of students keenly aware of threats to their life chances. The truly transformative approach, however, remains rare.

4. Re-purposing for systemic change

'Transformation' means systemic change. There is now mounting interest in 're-purposing' universities as a powerful key to unlocking such change. Surely the overriding purpose of universities should now be to help assure a safe, liveable world and planet into the foreseeable future [2].

06 Value and Values
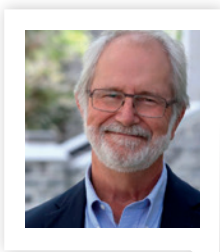
by **Patrick Deane,** *President, Magna Charta Observatory (MCO) and Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Queens University, Canada*

The news came earlier today that another British university has announced that it will be suspending its degree in English Literature. Apparently, this is the result of government policy hardening against so-called "low value" courses—courses, that is to say, in which fewer than 75% of students complete their studies and fewer than 60% "are in professional jobs or studying for a further degree within 15 months of graduating."[1]

Putting aside both my immediate outrage as a professor of English and more general stupefaction that a national policy for higher education could so undervalue a priceless national cultural asset, I am interested in what this news says about the context within which universities around the world are having to function. Similar dispatches, after all, arrive daily from jurisdictions all over the world, as a utilitarian orthodoxy— inseparable from the commodification of education propagated by multinational "thought leaders"—is asserting itself in higher education.

It is a fact of life for university leaders in Britain, Australia, North America and Europe that we labour within public policy frameworks that apotheosize measurement and are predisposed to understand value according to reductive econometric models: post-war public institutions expanded alongside industry and have increasingly become subject to the same expectations for productivity and return on investment. What is surprising and distressing is the extent to which that view, alongside other similarly questionable preoccupations of the developed world, has now been disseminated widely across the globe. And in that context, the suspension of a "low value" course in a national or ethnic language and literature—where knowledge of the subject

> **" The problem for universities today is that they have to some extent internalized that reductive notion of value: forced to reckon with it in government policy and public opinion, they find themselves colluding with it, replicating it, living it—even though in doing so they render the observance of "university values," traditionally understood, increasingly difficult to achieve. "**

is directly related to reversing the legacy of colonialism, for example—can be demonstrably destructive and antithetical to the university mission.

For insight into this challenge, I turn (where else?) to literature, and to John Milton's Satan, who in Book IV of *Paradise Lost* declares "Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell." The problem for universities today is that they have to some extent internalized that reductive notion of value: forced to reckon with it in government policy and public opinion, they find themselves colluding with it, replicating it, living it—even though in doing so they render the observance of "university values," traditionally understood, increasingly difficult to achieve. But it is not inevitable that a utilitarian, largely instrumental view of higher education must prevail. Universities always have choice in the matter and the laws of economics are not absolute—or even if they are, higher education is not merely a commodity.

That is a point central to the Magna Charta Universitatum (MCU), the "declaration and affirmation of the fundamental principles upon which the mission of universities should be based," which was first signed—by institutions making a choice--in Bologna in 1988 and updated for contemporary conditions in 2020. Neither document speaks directly to the value of literary and cultural study, but both affirm the principle of independence: "research and teaching must be intellectually and morally independent of all political influence and economic interests," as the Preamble to MCU 2020 puts it.

The very visible ways in which political pressure can be brought to bear on universities are well known, especially when the medium employed is economic—*vide* the recent decision to withdraw government funding for Gender and Women's Studies in Wyoming, and the similar decision to withhold accreditation for Women's Studies in Hungary in 2018. And last year in the United States, political interference at the Board and administrative levels—premised on the tautological claim that "a public university is an arm of the state, so challenges of the state are therefore against the university's interests"—was recognized as an "all-out assault" on the independence of the academy.[2]

The apparently common-sensical position that programs of study that do not have a high graduation and employment rate are of "low value" is no less ideologically driven and in the end just as antithetical to the principle of independence as these

high-profile abuses. Indeed, it is all the more pernicious for seeming apolitical when in fact its long-term effect will be to bend human aspirations to the "realities" of the market, to limit rather than liberate the potential of individuals as well as of society at large.

The Magna Charta Observatory is just launching the next phase of its Living Values Project, an initiative intended "to enable universities across the world to define, achieve engagement with and live effectively in accordance with their values."[3] Intentionality is key to this process, because the lesson of recent events is that the principles of the Magna Charta Universitatum cannot ever be taken for granted. MCU 2020 recognizes in its tone "that the *pursuit* of the fundamental values has worth along with their actual attainment." As a member of the drafting committee for that document I recall that one reason for stressing the aspirational nature of the principles was to recognize the diversity of what is possible or impossible around the world, but recent news from Britain, Europe and North America reminds us that nowhere are universities entirely secure in their greater human mission.

07 Steering Tertiary Education toward Greater Value(s): Making the Most of Effective Financing

by **Roberta Malee Bassett**, *Global Lead for Tertiary Education, the World Bank*

One of the most significant leaps in advancing higher skills and human development has undoubtedly been the massive global expansion of tertiary education over the past twenty years. From a global gross enrollment of 113 million in 2000 to more than 220 million students in 2022, around the world more and more students are investing in themselves and their futures by seeking the advanced learning provided through tertiary education. With this mass expansion, however, came an array of concerns related to fundamental considerations in the provision of higher education—can quality be maintained (assured) with greater diversity in student preparation and intention; is equity evident in this expansion, or are elites simply attending in greater number; are academic programs providing the learning and skills development that students and society need; who will pay for this expansion and how? In fact, these financing issues cut across all of the other questions, and it is imperative that governments look at how to utilize effective financing to steer their sectors toward high quality, equitable, and relevant delivery for all.

There is a somewhat anecdotal perception that appears in the media and, even, in the higher education academic space that

> ❝ A well-financed system is one where institutions can deliver on their specific mission, providing high quality and broadly relevant academic programs that fit the needs of their stakeholders. ❞

higher education financing is shrinking globally. Though this is the case in some specific places/under certain conditions, particularly in countries that have been impacted by political or other major disruptions, overall higher education financing has been steadily growing in gross terms around the world. What has certainly been happening with financing to the detriment of student services and, potentially, overall system quality, is the decrease in per student spending, as expanded enrollments outpace financing growth. And while more funding for higher education is certainly an ideal direction in most country contexts, in reality few countries can afford to keep pace between financing and enrollment levels. In response, therefore, better spending must be considered to ensure impact and value.

Steering [1] is a concept that is incredibly important in maximizing the potential for tertiary education to be a strategic and effective element of social and economic development. The essence of steering is its purposefulness—government and institutional leaders take proactive and specific actions to move the sector toward achievement of high value outcomes. In many countries (in some regions, most), the financing of tertiary education remains formulaic, most often a process of taking budgets largely based on financing salaries and other standard operational costs and adjusting annually to accommodate a form of cost-of-living increase. In these contexts, little to no regular thought or analysis is put into assessing whether these budgets reflect optimized value or opportunities. Within a steering operational framework, on the other hand, financing is seen as a tool for affecting actions and operation in a way that connects expenditures in the sector to outcomes.

So, what does this mean in practice? Expanded pressure to provide more and relevant tertiary education is forcing governments to develop a steering philosophy to maximize the funds they have while seeking to understand residual financing gaps and the options that may be available for filling them. One common outcome from these assessments is the determination that a new funding model is needed and often including some levels of performance-based financing.

Performance-based financing is particularly useful in tying spending in the sector to shared outcome goals negotiated and agreed between institutions and the financing line ministry. By requiring collaboration between government and institutions, this process promotes the development of an important partnership, built with shared objectives and working toward shared goals. Moreover, the development of performance-based financing agreements provides space for discussions on diversification and

the importance of developing tertiary education systems that support a multitude of institution types and missions. When institutions are allowed to be mission-driven, operating with a clear purpose and a focus on serving the needs of their particular stakeholder community, ownership over being good and impactful can comfortably be taken by institutional leaders. Likewise, government financing agents can have confidence that their spending has been analyzed and delivered for impact and with clear intention without infringing on core values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. In this way, financing is an instrument for steering the sector toward values shared between government and higher education alike.

At a recent conference, a participant asked, "what is a well-financed higher education system?" An excellent and challenging question. One reasonable answer is that a well-financed system is one where institutions can deliver on their specific mission, providing high quality and broadly relevant academic programs that fit the needs of their stakeholders (students, society, employers, etc.) Tying financing norms to a higher purpose is an opportunity to see the value of the funding and the impact that funding has in practice. By leading with a steering mindset— to be purposeful in setting the foundations and terms for the sector—leaders can better ensure that the resources going into tertiary education are worthwhile and valuable.

08 The Role of Open Science and Knowledge Circulation in the Process of Higher Education Transformation

by **Inga Žalėnienė**, *Rector, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania*

Universities have always been places where knowledge is created, preserved and passed on to the new generation of students, scholars, surrounding communities and society as a whole. But today, humanity is undergoing major existential challenges of climate change, armed conflicts, health crises, rapid technological changes, global disparities, erosion of democratic values, rule of law and democracy to name a few. In the face of these challenges, academic communities worldwide have to react much faster than before and take responsibility for the urgent unprecedented actions, create transformative solutions, and freely share their scientific advancements globally.

The global scientific response to the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us the enormous potential and impact of open science. The pandemic prompted an unprecedented amount of sharing ideas, research content and data within and beyond the scientific communities and across different sectors globally.

Knowledge can make a real impact on society and decision making, when you encourage and enable free knowledge circulation and open access to research results. One of the best examples is the collaboration among researchers for the production of COVID-19 vaccines, which helped to save lives during the pandemic. Also Open Online Educational Resources, which enabled an extraordinary number of schools and universities worldwide to continue the learning process by going online. Development of information, communication technologies and artificial intelligence accelerated the digitalization processes in all of the sectors.

This experience proves that open access to research results and data, with free knowledge circulation in a global space, are necessary tools for educators and researchers to go further, to step away from current commercial publishing systems, research assessment, reward systems, market-oriented ratings and rankings. The latter creates tensions, unfairness and exclusivity, rather than accessibility and inclusiveness.

The UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science created a common understanding and raised a global commitment to unlock access to science, data and knowledge, including Open Educational Resources and Citizen Science. It is a huge step forward for understanding the access to knowledge and information as a common public good and human right, and inseparable from the right to education for all, including flexible formal and informal learning paths, and lifelong learning activities.

It is no doubt that the Open Science movement will gradually transform traditionally closed science systems into more inclusive, accessible, efficient and transparent ones. However, changing the culture of science dissemination, not only at universities but also in societies, will require major national, regional, global policy reforms, financial support and time. Academic communities worldwide are welcoming and supporting the Open Science movement. For example, in Europe there are excellent regional and national initiatives (such as, the European Open Science Cloud initiative, rise of institutional, national open access repositories, free access to publicly funded research projects results and much more to add).

But at the same time and in the same jurisdictions, higher education institutions are forced to adjust to the market-

> **66** Open access to research results and data, with free knowledge circulation in a global space, are necessary tools for educators and researchers to go further, to step away from current commercial publishing systems, research assessment, reward systems, market-oriented ratings and rankings. The latter creates tensions, unfairness and exclusivity, rather than accessibility and inclusiveness. **99**

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oriented indicators as they are highly dependent on their governments in a struggle for public resources. These, in turn, fully depend on successful external evaluations, global ranking results (which are mainly based on quantitative data extracted from several monopolistic commercial publishing platforms, which, unfortunately, sometimes have nothing in common with a real impact on communities and society.

In this complex context, the new UNESCO Futures of Education report is timely and promising as it returns to the principles of a humanistic socio-cultural education paradigm, which in the pre-pandemic period in many countries was unfortunately dominated by the economic neoliberal paradigm. This new social contract proposed by UNESCO takes us back to the understanding of education as a common public good, as a fundamental human right. It gives us reason to hope that it will initiate certain mind-shifts within our states and governments regarding the HE sector's broadening missions, it's relevance and importance to societies.

Global challenges need a global response. International organizations, such as UNESCO, IAU and other global education networks, certainly have a fundamental role to play in convincing leadership to engage more forcefully in global cooperation in education and the sciences, in the implementation of a new social contract together with worldwide academic communities and other stakeholders, and in creating new instruments, open collaborative platforms to synergize resources globally. They will help us build more peaceful, just and sustainable futures for all.

09 How well do Universities Collaborate to Build Democratic Inclusive Societies?
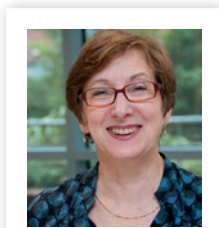
by **Ellen Hazelkorn**, *Joint Managing Partner, BH Associates & Professor Emeritus, Technological University Dublin, Ireland*

According to Bergin *et al* [1] "… helping to build democratic and inclusive societies is one of the indispensable missions of higher education". Achieving this requires that universities work "*with* their communities and function… as democratic anchor institutions…". But how well does higher education carry out this goal? One way to think about this issue is to examine the way in which universities collaborate with other colleges and higher education institutions at home and abroad.

Scientific exchange and collaboration

Universities have been places where scholars meet to exchange ideas and search for knowledge and understanding within and between societies for centuries. By the 19th century, academic networks were becoming a normal part of scientific endeavour; universities were encouraged to join them and to support and encourage faculty, student and research mobility and collaborations. The 20th and 21st centuries have seen a dramatic increase in the number and type of university associations and networks, publications and projects, research institutions and exchange programmes.

The intensification of international collaboration is best illustrated by the Human Genome Project formally launched in October 1990. It remains the world's largest biological project involving twenty universities and research centres in the US, UK, Japan, France, Germany and China. Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 has seen a burst of activity as universities align their strategies with the SDGs as showcased by their submissions to the *Times Higher Education Impact Rankings*. During this time of pandemic, high levels of collaboration were also evident in the search for a vaccine which involved many different research teams from around the world, facilitated by early publication of a machine-readable genome of the COVID-19 virus by Chinese scientists [2].

The transformation of education and research from an institutional and national based system to a highly internationalised higher education and global science system has been enabled by collaboration. The past decades have seen a phenomenal growth in the number and type of exchange and study programmes, joint degree programmes, research projects and an expansive network of collaborating scientists. Joint authorship between scholars in different countries has become a key indicator of world classness. Today, more than 60 countries are actively engaged in global science [3].

Is collaboration enhancing elite advantage?

However as international collaboration expands so does the distance between collaborating scientists. As Tijssen [4], and others have shown, researchers are more likely to focus on international partnerships rather than local ones, and to collaborate with large, international companies rather than local SMEs. According to Kwiek [5], individual scientists pursue "collaboration with the best of their peers, regardless of location". Indeed, elite universities collaborate primarily with other elite universities, and primarily with universities located in the global north. As Calderon asserts, "not all university networks stand equal". Networks comprising high ranked

> ❝ The world around us may be changing but academic culture remains focused on elite models. Too often universities engage in civic-mission-washing rather than creating genuine partnerships of mutual respect and benefit. What needs to change? ❞

research-intensive and well-resourced universities dominate whereas the global south is poorly represented.

There are many good examples of partnerships between universities and schools, TVET and other institution of higher education. There are examples also of joint programmes and progression routes. However, many of these initiatives are prompted by predatory desires by universities to hedge against demographic and enrolment decline rather than genuine partnerships. Further education and TVET colleges complain that universities are encroaching on their educational mission. Likewise bi-lateral arrangements between schools and university simply reduce choice by tying students to a single or small set of universities.

There are also good examples of engagement activities; although too often the definition of what constitutes good practice is defined by the universities themselves [6]. Too often universities use their public affairs offices to simply broadcast what they are doing rather than genuinely partner with their communities.

Going Forward

The world around us may be changing but academic culture remains focused on elite models. Too often universities engage in civic-mission-washing rather than creating genuine partnerships of mutual respect and benefit. What needs to change?

A key message is centred around ensuring civic mission is an intentional and holistic process rather than a collection of different activities [7]. The emphasis should be on creating public value for society and the economy by building an education and innovation eco-system with capacity for sustainable collaboration between all educators, business, government and civil society. This will also help ensure greater coherence and integration between different education levels and types to develop learning opportunities for students of all abilities, ages, ethnicities and talents. Ultimately, in everything universities do, there is an essential responsibility to recognise that liberal democratic societies require people who are active, informed citizens.

10 Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: Pathway to more Empowered Global Citizenship

by **Vidya Yeravdekar**, *Pro Chancellor, Symbiosis International University, India*

The present-day globalized world is one that presents a paradox: as the boundaries that separated countries and cultures get relegated into the background, one witnesses increasing uniformity as well as growing diversity. As

> ❝ **Higher education empowers people to undo the mindset and attitudes that result in a polarized, fragmented worldview, by creating an intellectual space in which diverse perspectives can be nurtured. Thus, higher education can be an indispensable instrument of socio-economic equality, cultural inclusion, conflict resolution, and peace building.** ❞

the globalization process creates growing impulsion to achieve competitive advantages, higher education assumes a key role in preparing the human resource base to meet the needs of the contemporary knowledge society. Higher education institutions, as core knowledge-generating and -disseminating organizations, must realize that internationalization of higher education is a transformative force that will lead us to a global knowledge society. Institutions need to prepare students to compete in the global graduate job market, while also addressing the responsibilities that come with being global citizens.

We are moving towards a world that is a complex network of inter-dependent links, where citizens understand that their lives are intertwined and that their attitudes, choices, and actions have global implications. In an increasingly globalized world, socio-economic engagements rely on dialogue and communication across diverse populations, necessitating interculturality. Growing global interconnections will result in the increasing presence of multiculturally diverse academic and professional settings and teams. In this context, intercultural competence assumes enormous significance. Put simply, it is the capacity to function effectively across diverse cultures. It allows one to communicate and engage with people from different cultural backgrounds, at home or abroad. Thus, intercultural competence is an orientation that allows one to adapt to a globalized world.

The globalized world is a diverse community. A dimension of this diversity are the stark inequities that beset the global population. Acknowledging disparities in access to resources and fundamental rights is a crucial first step in solving global challenges. Inequalities across gender, race, income, access to technology etc. affect access to quality education, and conversely, the attainment of education goes a long way impacting the degree to which one is affected by socio-economic inequalities. More recently, exploitative divisions across the global North and South have gained focus in global studies. This raises discussions around ways to bridge the North-South divide as well as increase South-South cooperation.

An important element of global citizenship is culture: how does one view one's own and other's culture? How does one gain understanding of other's culture while viewing one's own as "one among many"? How does one maintain inter-subjectivity while engaging with someone from another culture? Here,

culture is used in a wide sense to include not only heritage but all aspects of human activity including language, customs, food, trade, power structures, social organization, media etc. It is noteworthy that cultural identity is a complex, overlapping, and at times conflicting idea. There are multiple facets to one's cultural identity—one's religious, national, regional, linguistic, and ideological affiliations are all part of one's cultural identity. A global citizen identity is an overarching identity that subsumes—but not negates—other identities. An important recognition here is that global matters are not confined to national or regional boundaries; for instance, issues of terrorism, environment, migration, war, human trafficking etc. are global phenomena and must concern global citizens.

Higher education empowers people to undo the mindset and attitudes that result in a polarized, fragmented worldview, by creating an intellectual space in which diverse perspectives can be nurtured. Thus, higher education can be an indispensable instrument of socio-economic equality, cultural inclusion, conflict resolution, and peace building. In order to actualize this potential, it is important to foster an ethos of education that honours aspects of one's cultural identity that are "global" as well as "local". This would go a long way in helping students and future members of the workforce overcome systemic biases in their learning and work environments. Educators and scholars agree that the chief role of contemporary higher education is to prepare students to function in an integrated world order. It is no wonder that intercultural competence has gained centre stage in the discussion on globalization studies and internationalization of higher education. Intercultural skills are both a crucial component and outcome of "cosmopolitan capital". Teaching learning pedagogies that foster intercultural learning have the potential to prepare students to thrive in diverse communities and fulfil their responsibilities as global citizens.

Although it may seem on the surface as though intercultural competence is a narrow, emergent set of skills, it is not so in reality. An interculturally competent person gains personal qualities and advantages that enhance the totality of his profile as a life-long learner. These include communication skills, curiosity, open-mindedness, critical thinking, contextual intelligence, collaboration/teamwork, cross-disciplinary approach, continuing education etc.

In today's technology-facilitated world, it is no longer essential to travel to gain international experience in higher education. Up until quite recently, cross border student mobility was promoted as the singular pathway to intercultural competence. It has its advantages, but mobility has tended to deepen some long-standing chasms in international education, for instance, the polarization of global North as "host" and South as "sender" of international students. Further, mobility is prohibitively expensive. Recent advances in internationalization have helped develop and consolidate the concept of Internationalization at Home as approaches to achieving intercultural competence

in a manner that is more holistic, practicable, and equality-promoting.

Concluding observations

The pressing global challenges compel education policymakers and institutional leaders to view education, first and foremost, as an empowering tool—a means of fighting individual and collective inequities and injustices. The globalized world is an integrated system; it operates across layers of contexts and milieus. The global-ready individual is conscious of his place as a global citizen; values diversity; strives for equality, sustainability, and inclusivity; and participates in community and civic engagements.

Reinforcing intercultural competencies in higher education is crucial in a rapidly evolving global society. It would not be enough to say that global citizenship and intercultural competencies are intersecting concepts; rather, it would be more accurate to say that the latter is the driving force behind the former. An assessment of the recent trends and future predictions in higher education reveal an urgent need to embed intercultural competence in the higher education curriculum, institutional vision and strategy, and educational policy as a whole.

11 Internationalization and the Contribution of Universities to Future Society
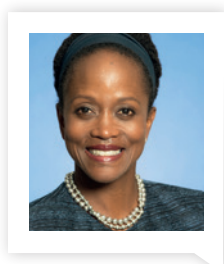
by **Esther Brimmer**, *Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, NAFSA, USA*

One of the ways universities contribute to future society is by providing spaces where people from different countries can meet and learn together. This cross-cultural contact is especially important as many of the world's most pressing issues, from climate change to expanding recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, are inherently beyond the scope of any one country to solve on its own. Universities offer spaces where people and ideas can intersect. The integration of global learning into curricula, programs, and partnerships provides intellectual vehicles for this interaction. Thus, systematic internationalization of the campus and curriculum can enhance the contribution of universities to future society.

In particular, tertiary education contributes not only to society directly as a benefit to students and scholars, but also as a larger public good. In this reflection, we note the role of universities in addressing cross-border crises, providing a space for people with different views to explore ideas

> 66 In difficult times, people may turn to easier answers that conform to familiar patterns or prejudices. The rise of authoritarianism in many places can be fueled by people's search for definitive answers to unanswerable questions when the future's only assurance is its uncertainty. Universities can provide nodes of knowledge where new ideas and better answers to society's ills can be explored and refined. 99

together, facilitating the creation of new knowledge, and most importantly, sparking complex critical thinking by individuals.

Additionally, collaborative research can help solve, or at least mitigate urgent crises that cross borders. The research teams that developed lifesaving vaccines against COVID-19 are international. Research groups and non-profit organizations measuring and proposing methods to adapt to or mitigate climate change are often transnational. Their expertise informs policy proposals in capitals and inter-governmental conferences. Not only are universities relevant to meeting short term challenges, they can support sustained commitment to research over time. Furthermore, universities can be havens for international students and scholars. Recently, universities have offered support to Ukrainian and Russian students caught in the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

International educators strive to promote universities as places where people from diverse backgrounds explore ideas together. Internationalization is not seen as a goal in itself, but rather as a way to maximize higher education's positive societal impact in an increasingly interconnected world. International education embraces both the mobility of students and scholars and internationalization at home.

The long standing, familiar version of internationalization is one that relies on the flow or exchange of students and scholars. This flow is increasing as travel resumes. Over time, international student mobility is expected to expand. According to Project Atlas/UNESCO data, there were 5.3 million international students in 2019 and 5.6 million in 2020 (IIE, 2022). Holon IQ market analysis indicates that that number will grow to 8 million by 2030 (HolonIQ, 2022).

The quest for educational opportunities continues to remain strong, and we will need to factor in economic strains and the legacy of the pandemic. Indeed, in information and technology driven economies, the need for knowledge is paramount. What type, which specialties, and who has access to it will remain fundamental societal issues. Access to higher education is part of the search for social justice, and international education must be part of that objective. One of the most important aspects of internationalization's evolution can be described as "internationalization at home." This

means an expansion beyond the flow of international students and scholars to include a greater number of university partnerships, faculty collaborations across borders, integrating global issues through curricula, etc. This expansion has important ramifications for making international education more accessible, which is a critical component of advancing social justice. Internationalization at home provides an opportunity to expose all students and scholars to a global experience. Technology and the global pandemic have greatly accelerated the implementation of online teaching and learning opportunities, including virtual exchange through international collaborative projects. This modality is here to stay, although we need to ensure access for all.

Fortunately, higher education internationalization itself has benefitted from international cooperation. The Network of International Education Associations (NIEA) brings together 15 organizations from around the world, all working to advance the internationalization of higher education. The NIEA contributed a paper to the 2022 UNESCO World Higher Education Conference. It asserted that the global conversation on internationalization needs to focus on a number of (relatively) new topics: inclusion, societal impact, sustainability, decolonization. In our paper, the NIEA asserted,

> Knowledge is not something human beings have by birth, but it needs to be acquired. Higher education is not only the place where knowledge is taught and learned, but it is also the place where knowledge is created and advanced, where ideas are shaped and narratives for the future are born. It is only through the interaction and mutual enrichment of previous knowledge systems, belonging to different ethnicities, nations and cultures, that overall human knowledge can advance for the betterment of the world and humankind as a whole. Higher education is an actor second to none in this process, and intentional internationalization is a key element in transmitting and advancing knowledge creation from one generation to the next.

Perhaps the most powerful role universities can play is helping people keep an open mind. The rapidity of technological change—which typically outpaces the speed at which societal norms and ethos can respond-heightens the need for critical thinking. Technology continues to reshape our age and the future generations to come. In a world swirling with information, human beings can struggle to differentiate between the important and the insignificant, between the eternal and the ephemeral.

The long-term disruptive nature of useful technology and the immediate crisis of the pandemic have upended lives and deepened societal divisions. In difficult times, people may turn to easier answers that conform to familiar patterns or prejudices. The rise of authoritarianism in many places can be fueled by people's search for definitive answers to unanswerable questions when the future's only assurance is its

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uncertainty. Universities can provide nodes of knowledge where new ideas and better answers to society's ills can be explored and refined. This conception envisions the university as both engaged in the society around it and as an access point to networks around the world. In our information age in which technology continues to shape our daily lives, the human mind is our most valuable asset. Universities help people from around the world meet and think together to address profound problems and prepare for a better future. But to reach their full potential, their doors—whether they be virtual, or physical -- must be open to all.

12 Can Academic Mobility Help Promote more Equitable Societies?

by **David Mills**, *Associate Professor, Department of Education, Oxford University and Deputy Director, Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE), United Kingdom*

In May 2022, more than 1500 people gathered in Barcelona for the third UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC), with many more attending virtually. The conference aims were nothing if not ambitious: it aspired to 'reshape ideas and practices in higher education', to promote sustainable development and shape a 'roadmap' for the sector leading up to 2030.

In the 18 months leading up to this event, UNESCO commissioned ten 'technical expert groups' to prepare 'background documents' on pressing issues facing world higher education. I led the report on academic mobility. Hosting three focus groups with academics and policy makers from across the world brought home the immensity of the challenge. Six million students travelled abroad to study in 2020, a number forecast to reach eight million by 2025. Only 2% of all students are internationally mobile, exacerbating inequalities between students. The associated carbon footprint seemed ecologically unsustainable, and contributors highlighted very different opportunities for mobility by region and socio-economic status. Some are forced to flee conflict and war, whilst others face visa or COVID restrictions. I found it hard to see how academic mobility could build a more equitable future.

Academic mobility is part of UNESCO's DNA. A year after its founding in 1946, it set up a 'clearing house' to promote international exchange and map degree equivalence. Convening the first regional conferences on the recognition of qualifications in the 1970s, UNESCO has striven to remove barriers to academic mobility, allowing students and academics to study and seek employment outside their home countries. Back in the 1970s, few would have predicted the massive growth in student mobility brought about by cheap air travel,

> ❝ University rankings are driving ever more concentration of institutional prestige and wealth, sustaining colonial divides. The challenge for higher education is not to sit back and watch these academic inequalities grow. The world's elite institutions could begin to develop more equitable models of international partnership, rooted in equity and diversity, underpinned by cross-continental teaching and learning programmes. ❞

regional higher education integration (especially that linked to the Bologna Process), state migration policies and the marketisation of Higher Education. Student and researcher mobility from the 'global South' to study and work in the US, Canada, Australia and the UK and elsewhere has led to permanent emigration of skilled labour, and there have been repeated policy concerns about the financial and societal costs of this unequal 'brain circulation'.

One way to rethink the challenge facing UNESCO's commitment to universities for sustainable development in the face of these global hierarchies and inequalities is to redefine academic mobility. The 2019 UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, or Glo Co for short, defines academic mobility as the 'physical or virtual movement of individuals outside their country for the purpose of studying, researching and teaching'. This recognises the growing importance of distance-learning and cross-border higher education (CBHE). Building on the regional conventions, the Glo Co aims to foster universal principles for the fair, transparent and non-discriminatory recognition of qualifications.

Post COVID-19, physical student mobility will return and continue to grow. As more than 10 million participants over 35 years of ERASMUS programmes can testify, educational and training exchanges offer richly immersive learning experiences. Equally, the signs are that virtual student mobility will also become more popular. Already, half of the international students registered on UK degrees are studying outside the UK. Admittedly, this shift to distance-learning, accelerated by COVID-19, presents new policy challenges. Inequalities in digital access, concerns about the quality of commercial provision and the challenges of degree recognition remain.

Sadly, global disparities in higher educational opportunity continue to widen. University rankings are driving ever more concentration of institutional prestige and wealth, sustaining colonial divides. The challenge for higher education is not to sit back and watch these academic inequalities grow. The world's elite institutions could begin to develop more equitable models of international partnership, rooted in equity and diversity, underpinned by cross-continental teaching and

learning programmes. The internet makes a whole range of new pedagogies possible, including virtual research supervision, online doctoral workshops and research collaborations. Hybrid combinations of physical and virtual academic mobility become a means to facilitate social equity and a global research imaginary, as well as encouraging regional mobilities and less carbon-intensive models of travel. Such partnerships could widen access to lifelong learning, offer a diversity of flexible study opportunities in a multipolar world, and provide opportunities for transnational research training.

None of this will be easy. International student fees are often used to cross-subsidise research. Richer universities have to wean themselves off this dependency. Governments and research funders could help by rethinking their funding models and promoting more equitable institutional partnerships. The recent announcement of the European Union-African Union innovation agenda might offer one way forward. New models of Open Science and research dissemination could help limit commercial profit-taking. Sustainable open access, as well as creating a more equal knowledge commons, could promote a more open circulation of knowledge. All of this depends on reorienting academic mobility as a tool for progressive internationalism, echoing UNESCO's original commitment to educational exchange. The opportunities are there, but many challenges lie ahead.

13 Student Representation in Higher Learning Institutions
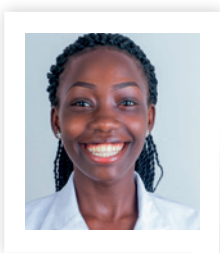
by **Sherine Omondi**, *Global Student Forum*

The Global Student Forum (GSF) is a democratic and independent organization that represents the voice of students worldwide. The organization represents students in 202 member unions and 122 countries, including The All African Students Union, Commonwealth Students Association, The European Students Union, Organising Bureau of European School Students Union and The Latin-American and Caribbean Continental Student Organization. The organization, with its large membership and global reach, represents the social, cultural, economic, and educational interest of over 200 million secondary and tertiary students around the world.

Our purpose is to promote free, quality education for all and provide strong representation of democratic and accountable student organizations in all decision-making spaces relating to the lives of secondary and tertiary students. To this end, the GSF has developed clear intention in ensuring that the voice of students is represented at all levels of education. The organization also champions equality and inclusion in student leadership, by encouraging and enhancing the quality of

student participation through development of capacities and institutional pathways in policy making.

The GSF recently coordinated the creation of the Global Student Declaration which was released during the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference 2022. The Declaration brought together student union representatives from across the world. It presented the collective hopes and aspirations of the global student movement. The document stressed the need to incorporate democratically elected student union representatives in meaningful student representation in education governance, policy making, and movements for gender justice, academic freedom, climate justice, financing, and students' rights and citizenship. It is necessary that this incorporation be regarded as both critical and fundamental.

In supporting the recent student declaration policy document, the GSF maintains that student participation can only be considered to be meaningful if it creates a tangible impact on the outcome of decision-making process in institutions of higher education, government ministerial institutions, and the wider civil society. The GSF is convinced that meaningful student participation can be achieved by promoting student involvement in quality assurance processes in institutions of higher learning. This conviction is informed by our belief that students are key stakeholders in institutions of higher education, hence the need to recognize them as equal partners in the realization of institutions' development agendas.

The students' address to the UNESCO's World Higher Education Conference 2022 made a convincing case for student involvement in decision-making. The address also made it clear that more responsive models of higher education governance and targeted systems are needed to accommodate diverse student participation. These models and targeted systems are necessary to promote a quality culture for meaningful engagement with student organizations. That is why the GSF proposes that effective student representation be established in all governing structures, programs, and projects that are introduced and developed. It is only through effective inclusion of student voices at the nascent stage of such projects and structures that students' rights can be guaranteed a place at the core of education programs and governing structures. As a result, strong student representation that is meaningfully engaged in the development of international programs can be ensured.

> ❝ More responsive models of higher education governance and targeted systems are needed to accommodate diverse student participation. These models and targeted systems are necessary to promote a quality culture for meaningful engagement with student organizations. ❞
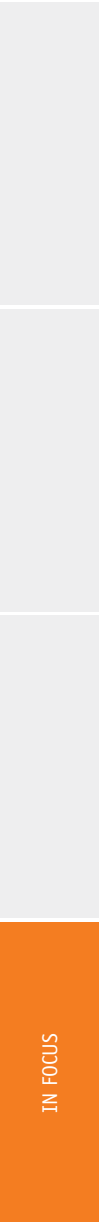
The COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened the case for a new responsive model in education. The pandemic mitigation measures adopted by governments around the world brought learning to a halt, denying students and other stakeholders the opportunity to effectively engage in education programs. Lockdowns, periods at home, and no-flight policies brought to the fore the necessity for a digital higher education model that could appropriately respond to the prevailing situation during the height of the pandemic. To further this model, the GSF's student declaration policy document proposed a partnership between teachers and learners for the development and implementation of teachers training programs aimed at interactive learning strategies necessary to engage students in the adoption of digital learning environments.

Finally, the GSF is convinced that education for sustainable development is a critical aspect of quality education. It is for this reason that we promote student voice in the advancement of strategies and policies, geared towards achieving sustainable development within their institutions and the entire higher education system of their countries. The GSF favors and actively champions education policies that equip students with the necessary knowledge and tools to address the climate crisis, promote sustainable development, and shape democratic, inclusive, and just societies.

14 Relevance and Value of Universities to the Future of Africa

by **Olusola Oyewole**, *Secretary-General, Association of African Universities (AAU)*

Africa's Agenda 2063 envisions that Africa will be a prosperous continent with resources and means to drive its own development. The continent will *have well-educated citizens and a skills revolution underpinned by science, technology, and innovation for a knowledge society*. But can Africa achieve this great vision? Universities are essential drivers to lead this vision. Are universities capable of taking up this great assignment? Are they empowered to provide the leadership and build the human resources for this noble goal? How relevant will universities be to the development of Africa? What will be the value of university education to the youths of Africa in which we place so much hope for the future of Africa?

The African Continent and Higher Education

The African continent is highly endowed with natural and human resources. It is a continent with over 2800 higher

> **If the transformation of the universities in Africa focuses on quality education and knowledge generation that serve the needs of Africa, they will surely remain relevant to the needs of the future.**

education institutions, a tertiary enrolment rate of around 13%, and about 6.2 million youths currently undergoing university education.

The relevance of higher education to development has never been in doubt. Higher education is necessary for shaping the future of a society, and strong higher education systems are a significant contributor to firmly position countries globally. They are critical for both economic development and the social well-being of the people. It is doubtful whether modern societies could survive without their universities. This is because the high-level skills needed for national development, such as teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers, researchers, civil servants, and entrepreneurs, are trained in the university system. Knowledge accumulation and application have become major factors in economic development and are at the core of a country's competitive advantage in the global economy.

The message of today's youths must inform the future of universities.

In recent times, many young people are starting to question the relevance of university education. When students complete a university degree only to end up unemployed or with limited opportunities to partake in the world of work, it generates doubt of the relevance of the type of education that is delivered in African universities. The reasons behind this doubt are not far-fetched. The level of collaboration between universities and industry in Africa is relatively low. The curricula of teaching and learning in many universities are still waiting to be reviewed to reflect the demands of the market of today. The graduates coming out from the universities have not been groomed to meet the expectations of the market place. While emphasis has been placed on theoretical knowledge, in most cases, the market is making demands for skills and competences that will help them to meet the demands of the competitive markets. The necessary message to our universities is that they must change to be relevant to the needs of their time. The current world is demanding that our universities impart the necessary skills and competencies that allow graduates to successfully integrate into the world of work.

Our universities must re-think themselves to be relevant to the future. The teaching methods in many universities in Africa have been largely teacher-centred and will need to change to a model that centres on the learner in order to develop the critical thinking abilities needed for today's world.

Universities in Africa need to wake up to the competitive realities of the time: knowledge does not reside solely within the four walls of the universities. Youths of today are reaching out beyond the universities to acquire the relevant skills, competencies, and knowledge needed to fully participate in the marketplace. Our universities must change to be the ones to provide these skills, competencies, and knowledge needed.

Research Relevance

There is also an urgent need for change in the African university system when it comes to research. Universities in Africa need to increase research capacity, and further contribute to knowledge generation and innovation through research. Today, advanced degree holders of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) represent only 1% of all researchers worldwide. Wachira [1] reported that Africa's global share of scientific publications rose marginally from 2.81% in 2015 to 3.5% in 2019, including the Sub-Saharan Africa's global share of scientific publications which also increased from 1.41% in 2015 to 1.8% in 2019.

Funding for research is the lowest in Africa compared to other continents. The infrastructure for research is decaying and becoming obsolete in many universities in Africa. African universities need to demonstrate their relevance by being responsive to the needs of the local industries and production processes. As we move into the future, African universities should be ready to carry out research that will enhance the agro-food processing industry, employ digitalization in its processes, and solve the infrastructural deficits, challenges of climate change, diseases, and pandemics on the continent. African universities should be at the forefront of improving the transportation system, making energy to be available and cheap, and transforming natural resources into forms that will yield better dividends to society.

Value of the Universities to the Future of Africa

Africa needs its universities for development. The universities that will drive future development need to transform and be imagined differently from what exists today. Emphasis will need to be focused on research, innovation, wealth creation, and skills development. Research and knowledge production of the universities must contribute to developing indigenous solutions to hunger and poverty, climate change, poverty, and to improving bad governance. If the transformation of the universities in Africa focuses on quality education and knowledge generation that serve the needs of Africa, they will surely remain relevant to the needs of the future.

15 Enhancing the Relevance of Higher Education: Contributions to the Debate from a European-Latin American and Caribbean Perspective
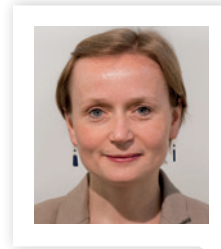
by **Anna Barrera**, *Senior Programme Manager, EU-LAC Foundation*

The relevance and value of Higher Education can be derived from the challenges that each local community, region, and humanity more broadly is facing at any given moment. Today, our societies are confronted with a scenario of considerable uncertainties and multiple, complex and intertwined environmental, economic, social challenges. The 2030 Agenda, with its goals and targets, shows the way forward to comprehensively address poverty and inequalities by improving education, promoting access to common goods, spurring economic growth, while combating climate change. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play an essential role in equipping both the young and elder generations with the skills to develop innovative, creative and sustainable solutions to address such challenges. In dialogue fora that the EU-LAC Foundation – an international organisation established by the member states of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean – has implemented in recent months, several aspects have been put forward to transform the sector.

The nature of contemporary challenges requires fresh ways of approaching, analysing and addressing problems, and, as a consequence, the drawing on different knowledge systems, new pedagogical concepts, and teaching methodologies. HEIs need to go beyond the transmission of disciplinary knowledge and create learning environments that involve epistemic, interdisciplinary, and procedural dimensions which enable students to develop agency. This means the will to act responsibly and the setting of goals and road maps – and if needed, adjust them – to implement changes that positively influence their lives and the world around. The creation of such environments is a difficult task, for it involves the development of trust in students' own potential and talents, critical self-reflection, emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing, communication and collaborative work across disciplines, institutions, distances, and cultures, the acceptance of ambiguities, dissonances, and dilemmas, and practical and procedural skills.

As a prerequisite for unleashing an HEI's full potential, universities must address the continued gender imbalances and discriminations, implement policies to increase women's representation at all academic stages and in the institutional governance structures, and revisit strategies to attract, facilitate access and offer guidance for women in STEM Higher Education programmes. Taking into account that violence

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> 66 **HEIs should develop more channels to enter into dialogue with the communities and societies in which they operate, offering access to knowledge generated at universities in pertinent languages and formats, and engaging citizens in dialogue and collaborative projects.** 99

against women penetrates all spheres of daily life – including HEIs – addressing the safety of women in facilities, campuses and the means of transport to and from HEIs, for example by the adoption of Protocols for the Prevention and the Attention of Gender Violence, has proven its effectiveness in practice.

Much has been said and written about universities, but there is the tendency to be dismissive of "traditional", "alternative", or "informal" knowledge systems in public discourse. Indeed, more often than not, such other sources and references are "folclorised" and hierarchically subordinated to "official" knowledge that corresponds to the scientific standards adopted by universities worldwide. Taking the rich indigenous knowledge in Latin America as an example, there is the pending task of generating spaces for articulation and interaction between diverse epistemologies and the co-production of knowledge, based on the conviction that all these knowledge systems can contribute to providing answers to the challenges faced by our societies in their respective contexts.

The technical possibilities of digitalisation and artificial intelligence, as seen during the Covid-19 pandemic, play an important role in the transformation of the sector. However, the performance, resilience and capacity of HEIs to react in such challenging times critically depend on the availability and accessibility of the appropriate technical infrastructure, not only within the institutions themselves, but also among their students. They should be equipped accordingly and be able to count on internet coverage even in peripheral or rural zones of their countries. Technology is only as good as their users. Thus, HEIs need to make an effort to instruct their staff on how to incorporate technology adequately, supporting the creation of the aforementioned learning environments. In parallel, university communities and political decision makers should engage in continuous reflection on the appropriate roles of both technology and educators to ensure that digitalisation and new technologies remain human-centred.

Not least, much of the funding for scientific research and teaching in regions such as Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean stems from public sources. Ultimately, it is the citizenry that must recognise the critical role of Higher Education in the addressing of challenges of our times. Therefore, all efforts to transform the HE sector should be accompanied by strategies to transfer the results of research to political decision makers in an effective and adequate manner, in order to offer the information to generate reforms required

at the policy level. Simultaneously, HEIs should develop more channels to enter into dialogue with the communities and societies in which they operate, offering access to knowledge generated at universities in pertinent languages and formats, and engaging citizens in dialogue and collaborative projects.

Whichever efforts HEIs enact, from the perspective of the EU-LAC Foundation, they should be relevant to the place and the region and respond to the specific circumstances, realities and needs of the societies in which they are embedded.

16 Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society

by **Giovanni Molari**, *Rector, and* **Raffaella Campaner**, *Vice Rector for International Relations, University of Bologna, Italy*

Universities are fundamental actors in societal contexts, and they play a range of roles related to present and future challenges. It is possible to consider three axes grasping distinctive features of universities and making their relevance apparent: the nature of academic communities; the construction of scientific knowledge; the sense of responsibility in local and global contexts.

The first concerns the very purpose of the birth of universities, i.e. bringing people together from different areas, countries, disciplinary interests, and this is still what they are devoted to on a daily basis. The essence of academic communities lies in their being constituted by a variety of subjects – which not only offer precious expertise in a number of fields, but also represent a range of cultural backgrounds. In this sense, universities provide an exceptionally rich opportunity to design and test the joint work and common life of highly heterogeneous communities. Students, scholars and staff share rooms, infrastructures, tools and facilities, working constantly together to achieve scientific results. In this sense, the academic community can be easily reckoned as an extraordinary living laboratory where multiculturalism and multilingualism are lived in practice and, simultaneously, theoretically investigated, across ages and nationalities. The University of Bologna constantly promotes activities aimed at community building, ranging from the Students Ambassadors' initiative to national and international staff weeks, to foster dynamics of social interaction and inclusivity, co-existence of differences, constructive exchanges. Mutual understanding and tolerance, design of best practices and new communication formats to

> **The relevance of universities is expressed by their inestimable contribution to the cultural and technological progress of scientific communities and – through them – to humankind as a whole. Scientific communities of peers join efforts and strategically compete to build and share knowledge, transferring it to new generations.**

promote inter-cultural and trans-cultural dialogue, are all implemented and spontaneously tested within the university – which can hence provide very relevant evidence and promising options for the wider social contexts.

The second axis is related to the commitment to teaching, learning and research, which represents the shared element of aggregation of a community devoted to the elaboration and dissemination of scientific knowledge. Universities are great promoters of scientific progress. Their vocation is to pursue excellence and innovation, to be at the forefront in understanding what the trends and major challenges are, to be ready to play a pivotal and transformative role whenever needed. Academic institutions are called to grasp what directions the development of knowledge should take, putting forward farsighted visions on such crucial issues as – just to mention a few – technology and artificial intelligence, sustainability, climate change, migrations, health and wellbeing. Within the "microcosmos" of competences that universities exhibit, scientific knowledge is elaborated, taught and disseminated. The University of Bologna is committed both to innovative research and education, with a large and increasing range of multi- and trans-disciplinary projects and programs, and cutting-edge activities with private stakeholders. Each and every activity pursued must be faithful to academic values, in full respect of the rigor and constraints of the scientific method, respecting the canons of genuinely scientific work, and defending academic freedom and integrity – from the lab, up to the relations with private actors, companies, technology hubs, policy-makers. In this perspective, the relevance of universities is expressed by their inestimable contribution to the cultural and technological progress of scientific communities and – through them – to humankind as a whole. Scientific communities of peers join efforts and strategically compete to build and share knowledge, transferring it to new generations. Universities are thus a privileged *trait d'union* between research and teaching. They provide open and constantly renewed scenarios to experiment cross-disciplinary hybridization and warrant the respect of standards to grant genuine versus non- and pseudo-science.

The third axis is linked to the construction of knowledge and its dissemination beyond the boundaries of universities, for societies and, in the end, for the global community, widely conceived. Societies benefit from the progress of knowledge and scientific achievements, as well as from the networks of relations universities foster. Universities, as institutions devoted to investigations and learning, make sure that the outcomes

of scientific enquiries translate into benefits for the widest possible population. Discoveries and prominent research can then be turned – be it in the short or medium/long run – into improvements of means and quality of life, resources, health and wellbeing. In addition to positive contributions to life conditions and technological development, made possible by collaborations with public institutions and private subjects, universities play a crucial role as a socially engaged actors in larger respects and at different scales. Just to highlight a few levels at which academic initiatives can impact socially relevant contexts, let us recall science diplomacy, cooperation, and the favoring of hosting schemes for refugees and asylum seekers. Even if the targets and interacting subjects are significantly different, all these cases are testament to the universities' sense of responsibility and commitment to social engagement. The construction of top scientific knowledge has to do with national and international equilibria, with the sharing of competence and support of different areas of the world, and with the welcoming of students and scholars from conflicts and socio-economic crises. In collaboration with local institutions, the University of Bologna takes active part in – e.g. – the network "Scholars at Risk", University Corridors for Refugees, hosting schemes for minorities and protection seekers, and promotes service-learning activities among its students. Universities' values such as inclusivity, freedom, defense of human rights and rights to follow one's own education path, shall thus translate into actual life-changing experiences within their social contexts, and contribute to making societies ready for future challenges.

In order to remain relevant to societies, universities need to be both faithful to their core features and missions, and sensitive to social transformations. Changes in such aspects as demographics, roles of class and gender, inter-generational relations and relations between individuals and communities, migration processes, availability and distributions of resources, technology and media – just to mention a few examples – must be taken into very careful account. They in turn affect the understanding of culture, education and research and, therefore, the understanding of what universities stand for by themselves and with respect to social contexts.

17 Reflections on the Future of University Education

by **Rita Akosua Dickson**, *Vice-Chancellor, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi Ghana*

University education has a mandate to train the minds and hearts of students to respond to the pressing needs of society. Universities are strategically placed to conduct research with the intention of making life better for society. The design of curricula and its consequent implementation is directed at

> Future universities must therefore focus on helping students not just to think outside the box, but rather to begin to think without the box entirely. Our teaching methods must be modified to facilitate thinking by engaging students with projects that push them to think and address the problems in society. ""

ensuring that the vision and mission for which universities are established are achieved. The real indication that universities are living up to their mandate is dependent on the impact they are making in society. As we reflect on the future of university education, I would like to highlight a few things which are necessary for universities to continue to remain relevant moving forward.

Industry Driven Impactful Research

Universities can respond to the challenge of solving the problems of society by guiding graduates on how to critically analyze problems and find simple but practical solutions to complex problems. Future universities must therefore focus on helping students not just to think outside the box, but rather to begin to think without the box entirely. Our teaching methods must be modified to facilitate thinking by engaging students with projects that push them to think and address the problems in society. Research in our universities must be impactful and lead to positive transformation in our communities. Universities have a responsibility to engage communities in which they are situated to ensure that research is beneficial to the communities. The academic gown worn during graduation must not be left behind upon graduation. Graduates of our institutions of higher learning must take the gown to our communities and initiate interventions that will positively impact the lives of people.

A report published by the "Royal Academy of Engineering" revealed that every year universities continue to graduate huge numbers of engineers who are supposed to drive the developmental agenda by taking up employment in various industries. The report showed that there is a deficit in the number of skilled personnel to man most of our industries, even though universities continue to churn out graduates. Many of them lack the practical hands-on skills needed to drive an industrial revolution in our countries. As we reflect on the future of university education conscious efforts need to be made to bridge the gap between academia and industry. Students need to spend a significant percentage of their training working in industry to acquire the skills and experience necessary for a successful professional life. Universities must create avenues for colleagues in industry to share their wealth of experience with students in their training. It is hoped that with these interventions graduates will be equipped with the necessary skills to enter the world of work.

Training Ethical and Job Ready Leaders for Tomorrow

Unemployment is a major challenge in most emerging economies; university education must therefore not end with preparing graduates for the job market; rather, it must equip them with entrepreneurial skills to start their own businesses. Research must lead to the generation of new knowledge. While innovation helps academic institutions recognize the value of research, entrepreneurship on the other hand unearths the commercial value of research. The measure of success for universities of the future must be based on the number of start-ups that have emanated from impactful research in our universities. Universities of the future must invest in incubation hubs, maker spaces and business incubation centers to drive the entrepreneurship agenda.

Universities need to play a key role in ensuring that the conscience of society is not compromised. As we deliberate on the future of university education, we must not just be interested in forming the minds of graduates; we must also ensure that we are raising ethical leaders to occupy strategic positions in society. We must be conscious about making sure that graduates have sound ethical principles to guide their practice since academic excellence must go hand-in-hand with firmly grounded ethics to positively affect society.

Universities Without Walls

As we reflect on the future of university education, we must not imagine universities as physical places but rather as conceptual spaces where students enroll in our programmes from the comfort of their homes. We look to a future where students are at liberty to accumulate courses from different universities the world over and submit the acquired credits for degrees from their parent university. At the same time, universities must commit resources to ensuring that the quality of the degrees awarded are not compromised but must make sure that the necessary requirements needed for successful graduation are met. Courses requiring acquisition of practical skills and the successful completion of a critical mass of lab-based courses should be strictly adhered to or we risk churning out volumes of graduates who end up becoming misfits in the job market.

In ending my reflections on the future of university education let me say that our single most important asset is our students. I therefore urge all university managers to put our students first in all our decisions and give them a seat and a voice at the table always. Let us not leave anyone behind knowing that together we can build universities we all can be proud of.

18 Reimagining the Future and Relevance of University Education: Transforming Ourselves towards a more Equitable and Sustainable Future

by **Marc Jerry**, *President, Luther College at the University of Regina, Canada*

In March of 2020, many of us were unexpectedly forced to shut down our campuses and pivot to emergency remote learning. At the time, it was an idea that was unheard of for most university campuses typically built on traditional in-person learning and campus community models. Many students who convocated this spring experienced more than half of their degree in a remote or hybrid model: the long-term impact is significant. Now, as institutions face the reopening of our campuses, we are seeing that a return to what normal looked like in early 2020 is now unlikely. Students have now embraced flexible modes of delivery of education, employees have adapted to remote work environments, and the pandemic emphasized what matters to the world most: the liberal arts and sciences, relationships and community, and demands for a more sustainable world. These are all things that universities can uniquely provide. With such a backdrop in mind, what kind of transformations in higher education are needed to create a more equitable and sustainable society?

Workplace Transformation: Leadership and Flexibility

Pre-pandemic, very few people likely ever believed that so many functions of a university could be accomplished entirely electronically. This is a positive change in terms of sustainability as all were forced to consider exclusively paperless means of communicating – paper forms became obsolete, financial management became entirely electronic, and faculty who once used to provide paper handouts in class were all forced to move materials online. All these transformations are environmentally friendly and help move us towards a more sustainable future. While not all functions of a university work well entirely remotely, some ancillary and administrative functions can: financial services, academic advising, etc., all saw a move to successful remote options supporting students and employees.

There is also a deep need for senior leadership who understand empathy and a leadership style that exudes kindness over dominance. There is a notable level of anxiety and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)-like effects of the pandemic on employees, even for those in relatively privileged and protected positions. Normally patient people have run out of capacity

> Universities will continue to have a special role to play in the healing of our world, as we continue to produce graduates who have learned how to care for one another and the world around us, and the importance of the true value of kindness, grace, and community.

to manage issues via email – a medium that loses nuances of language and can cause even small problems to explode. Also, many employees no longer tolerate power structures that do not seem to care for them, and many have chosen to quit or change jobs as a result. Universities that embrace flexible work policies, where appropriate, will be a part of the sustainable transformation: a lower carbon footprint of office space is needed, less commuting and polluting occurs, and employees enjoy a higher quality of life in their roles of supporting our students.

Program and Curriculum Transformation: academic programming for a more sustainable future

The pandemic also highlighted worldwide income inequalities and has had a disproportionate effect on women and those in relatively lower income service industries that had all but been shut down. Those are also just the visibly disadvantaged: the pandemic has heightened the divide in society even around racial issues and other divisions. Universities will need to transform programming to emphasize what a more equitable and sustainable world could look like. These subject areas are best highlighted in a liberal arts and sciences education whose concern includes the sustainability of humanity.

Some government funding partners for public institutions are under pressure to show a positive return on investments for universities. This has led some regulators to require performance measurement frameworks – some of which try to measure the unmeasurable. While trade schools can provide a direct link to employment outcomes, universities have a harder task to quantify the value of soft skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and social impacts on humanity for a civil society. Universities are uniquely situated to answer these bigger philosophical problems that transcend numerical indices in university performance indicators. New qualitative measures may be needed to address this transformation.

### Indigenization of Universities: A uniquely Canadian context

Canada is also facing a unique transformation in the Indigenization of our campuses and programming. With the backdrop of our residential school history, university leadership are looking at ways to acknowledge our colonial past and the

impact on the first nations peoples on the lands we now occupy. Land acknowledgements, review of tenure procedures for faculty that allow practical research and indigenous knowledge are all examples of steps forward. This work follows the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the 94 calls to action, including what educational institutions can do to support reconciliation in Canada. I wonder how this transformation might inform other world contexts.

The pandemic has been deeply tragic in terms of its human cost. The silver lining is that it has highlighted the need to transform our world to one that is more sustainable and life giving. Universities will continue to have a special role to play in the healing of our world, as we continue to produce graduates who have learned how to care for one another and the world around us, and the importance of the true value of kindness, grace, and community.

19 How the War in Ukraine Changes European Higher Education
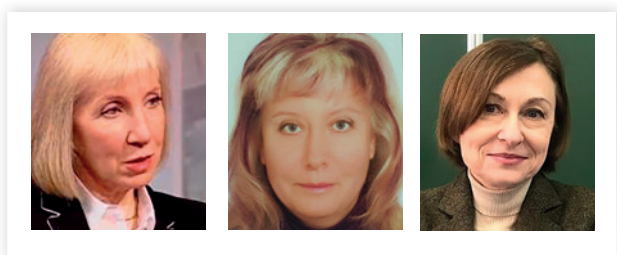
by **Kateryna Astakhova**, *Rector*, **Kateryna Mykhaylyova**, *Vice-Rector for Education* and **Irina Guslenko**, *Head of the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation, Kharkiv University of the Humanities "People's Ukrainian Academy," Ukraine*

Ukraine has a developed system of higher education: 386 institutions of higher education (including 103 private ones) with more than 1 million students.[1] Given the Russian Federation's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine, the education system has had to adapt to the prevailing conditions.

We would like to share some universal and specific observations informed by these times of war. A full transition to online education and mass migration of the students and staff are among the first universal trends. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, universities were prepared for the shift to remote teaching and learning, yet an additional layer of the complexity was to cater for a population that was physically dislodged. Driven by people's fear and desire to save their lives, chaotic migration has led to the de-prioritization of educational objectives. No Ukrainian universities had ever been forced to continue operations during a period of active war and

> **The educational system of Ukraine was "unpacked;" the war set the conditions for the operations, transformation and the challenges faced within the system. However, part of the response is what might be referred to as the "internalization of higher education".**

migration. As such, it was difficult to respond to proposals from foreign partners to move the institution itself in this chaotic and difficult context.

Other trends observed were the displacement of some universities within Ukraine, discontinuation of the education process in some educational establishments, and an increase in differentiation between students' and teachers' educational and social practices. That is, some were in technical and social comfort; some were limited by their conditions and did not always have the opportunity to take part in all forms of the educational process; and, some did not have the opportunity to be involved in educational processes at all. In addition, many people remaining in the war zone were actively involved in volunteering and other types of community service projects. Under these conditions, the vital task of the university administration was to give social, psychological, financial, technical, and other support for teachers and students, regardless of where they were.

As a result, the educational system of Ukraine was "unpacked;" the war set the conditions for the operations, transformation and the challenges faced within the system. However, part of the response is what might be referred to as the "internalization of higher education."

One of the first challenges refers to the loss of local coordinates: both students and teaching staff instantly became scattered around the world. This means that the educational process was suddenly subject to new considerations such as time differences and the need to adjust to the (non-educational) social requirements of the host countries, etc.

It is important to stress that European countries have done their best to integrate Ukrainian citizens into their social space and partly into the economic sphere. Unfortunately, higher education has largely been overlooked in this integration. However, current practices have made it possible for Ukrainian universities to take advantage of internationalization opportunities and to develop them according to the continuously developing needs of Ukrainian students.

Current integration practices have also induced changes both in the Ukrainian and in the European higher educational systems. Many European universities were faced with the opportunity to admit new students (and teaching staff), the majority of which had no international educational and/or professional experience

outside Ukraine. Some had to overcome barriers in the language of instruction, and some were suffering from post-traumatic stress and were additionally burdened with issues relating to safety, nutrition, medical treatment, etc.

The months-long continuity of these trends became another challenge. It became a significant undertaking for Ukraine to maintain its education system while students and staff were submerging themselves in non-Ukrainian higher education institutions. As a way forward, Ukrainian education must position itself anew (in wartime!) and strive to retain its attraction while competing with higher education institutions across Europe.

Learnings from the internationalization of education can be a valuable tool for introducing the experience of foreign and globalized educational practices. Meeting European and world standards is one way of doing this. University proactiveness is outpacing centrally made decisions made by the ministry and serves as a reminder that the universities are local actors in a global world.

"Mosaicification" is another important challenge. Students and staff have become separated geographically, and the conditions under which educational activities are carried out depend on their individual situation and living conditions. The mosaic character of educational efforts has become especially evident for those faced with partially destroyed educational institutions. After all, the university campus constitutes an important part of creating unity and a shared identity and culture. The destruction of campuses is visual evidence of an attack on a shared culture that is essential to the integrity of educational institutions, especially to those that are geographically remote.

Unleashing the potential of internationalization also depends on developing social partnerships. Modern education is transforming at such a rate that the relations between the internal and external stakeholders have changed, and their range of influence has widened for the entire European education system.

Internationalization can also help address issues of effective interaction between all levels of modern education. Today the development of modern higher education requires analysis across the whole educational sector and at all levels, from preschool to lifelong learning opportunities.

Thus, we are witnessing changes in the educational process at the pan-European level, changes in and among students and staff in the European educational area, changes in educational strategies, and the need for new solutions in the field of education management. It is important to underline that Ukrainian education represents an important part of European diversity.

20 Universities' Alignment with the SDGs is the Way to a more Equitable and Sustainable Society

by **Antonio José de Almeida Meirelles**, *Rector, University of Campinas (Unicamp) – Brazil*

Higher education has undergone an intense process of specialization over the last three decades. This trend is not limited to Brazil but can also be observed in other parts of the world. On the one hand, this process had positive consequences, resulting in the formation of more qualified scientists. On the other hand, however, it brought forth the emergence and domination of avid specialization to the detriment of a more integrated and systemic view with which academe reflected on the problems of Brazil. Therein lies one of the contemporary challenges in the academic sphere: in order to deal with the complexity of the problems society faces today, higher education needs to recover its more universal character, without negatively impacting the benefits resulting from specialization.

In this context, one of the most feasible alternatives is the alignment of universities with the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) defined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda. The transversality of the SDGs is fertile ground for awakening and fostering the community spirit among academics without losing sight of the dialogue between the disciplines and their respective expertise. As they express problems whose origins are multifactorial, the 17 SDGs also have the power to catalyze cooperative efforts, requiring solutions that take into account numerous perspectives and a broad range of specialized disciplines. One of the most immediate effects of the universities' alignment with the SDGs would undoubtedly be the flourishing of spaces for collective and multidisciplinary action, paving the way for a more fruitful dialogue with society.

In the specific case of Brazil, a country whose shortcomings are evident and have historical roots, the adherence of academe to the SDGs would create conditions to link, in a permanent way, topics such as innovation and sustainability to the most pressing needs of society. This approximation would leverage a virtuous circle that would benefit the population, either

" Universities cannot ignore the present and the future. One of their roles throughout history has been to capture the signs of transformation and analyse them in light of their mission. It is up to universities to be the voice of these trends. "

by speaking directly to its various strata, or through the formulation of public policies. The moment calls for the search for compatibilities to transcend particular preferences for a certain ideological hue. In this sense, it is imperative to be aware of the signs of the zeitgeist, even more so when looking for answers to problems that affect most people's lives.

Two emblematic cases are the ongoing transition to the use of renewable resources for different purposes, such as energy generation and production of bioplastics, for example, and the increasing demand for a more equitable and inclusive society. Universities cannot ignore the present and the future. One of their roles throughout history has been to capture the signs of transformation and analyse them in light of their mission. It is up to universities to be the voice of these trends. It is a commitment to be made both intra – and extramural.

Externally, this can be done by demonstrating to the population that universities, in their diversity, are essential for building a better world. In the Brazilian case, this task becomes more urgent due to the recurring attacks against science in recent years. Internally, universities must go beyond vocalizing on a macro scale. One may look to the importance of energy transition, for example; it needs to be implemented within their own campuses.

In the same way and in the same dimension, social inclusion must be among their priorities. Changes must be incorporated at all levels of academe, from undergraduate students to faculty, from postdoc researchers to technical and administrative staff. In the case of students, the SDGs must be present in the scope of research and disciplines. The academic curriculum needs to reflect this new reality, and do so inclusively, not least because students are the bridge between the two worlds. It will be the new generations who will propagate these messages around the world through an array of institutions and entities -across companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public agencies and social movements.

Aligning academic education with the 17 SDGs is a prerequisite for a sustainable future across all the social, economic, and environmental levels. We need to create spaces for these complementary studies and create interfaces between areas through knowledge innovation – and so hand in hand with the students. The great challenge for universities is to connect the general perspective with the specificities of each profession. It is evident that actions should not be limited to curricular changes. It is also up to the faculty, due to the strategic role they play in the education of students, to incorporate universal concepts of the SDGs in their teaching activities. Despite the major challenges ahead, universities can – and must –spearhead the building of a better future.

21 Creating Value for Future Society and Economy in Qatar
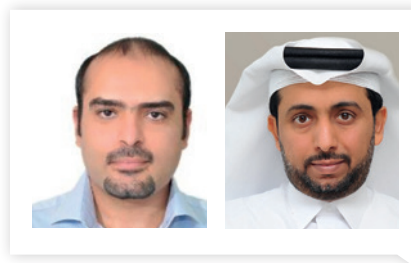
by **Mahmoud Abdulwahed**, *Director, President Office; and* **Hassan Al-Derham**, *President, University of Qatar, Qatar*

The Birth & Evolution of the University Model

The university model can be traced back to the 9th and 10th century where its initial birth or inception took place in the Middle East and North Africa region, e.g. Karueein University in Fez Morocco (859 AD) and Al-Azhar University in Cairo Egypt (972 AD). In that era, universities focused mainly on "education" as their sole mission. Education remained the main core mission of universities that emerged afterwards across the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, North America, and elsewhere in the world during the medieval ages and the Renaissance.

Subsequently, universities developed a second core mission with a focus on research, mainly in Europe and the Western world, which received particular impetus with the advancement of the first, second, and third industrial revolutions (as well as defence industry needs in WWI, WWII, the Cold War, and beyond). This can be dated back to the emergence of the "Humboldtian" model when a unified educational model marrying education & research started to appear in Germany in the early 19th century. Towards the last quarter of the 20th century, and early 21st century, an additional emphasis on the role of universities societal and economic impact emerged. Institutions gave increased attention to societal or economic impact, or on both, leading to an understanding of the core missions of universities centered around: 1- education, 2- research, 3- socio-economic development (or societal impact).

A Rationale and a Model for the Transformation of Public Universities

There are numerous reports showing gaps between the educational outcomes of university graduates and the needs of the labour market. In many universities, the curriculum is designed with little input from the labour markets. Several universities in developing countries have adopted the curricula from developed countries that were originally designed for different societies.

Regarding the research agenda, there is continuous focus on applied, translational, and socio-economic impact-driven R&D (with a capital D, Development) across the major funding programs in the world, such as NSF and EU Horizon 2020. While universities during the 20th century shifted their societal and economic relevance agenda towards an agenda that privileges research and publications as a main measure of success (the rankings paradigm), it is legitimate to question this and revert back to the notion of societal and economic impact. This is also reflected in recent rankings by THE that incorporate societal impact.

Finally, most universities worldwide focus only on education and research and are limiting their focus on economic development which means that significant investments in education and research do not transfer into real economic impact.

Considering these aforementioned challenges, there are a number of key drivers or questions for public universities to reconsider:

1. Educational mission: What kind of graduate does the university aim to produce? How can these attributes be defined and worked into the curriculum/co-curriculum in a way that educates graduates with the attributes and competencies necessary to maximize national socio-economic and sustainable development? What are the market skills gaps and future projected skills required?

2. Research mission: What are the national grand challenges (sustainability, socio-techno-economic)? How is the university's R&D agenda aligned to these challenges? To which extent does the university's R&D agenda come up with solutions to these challenges?

3. Socio-Economic development mission: To which extent do the university outcomes in education and research actually
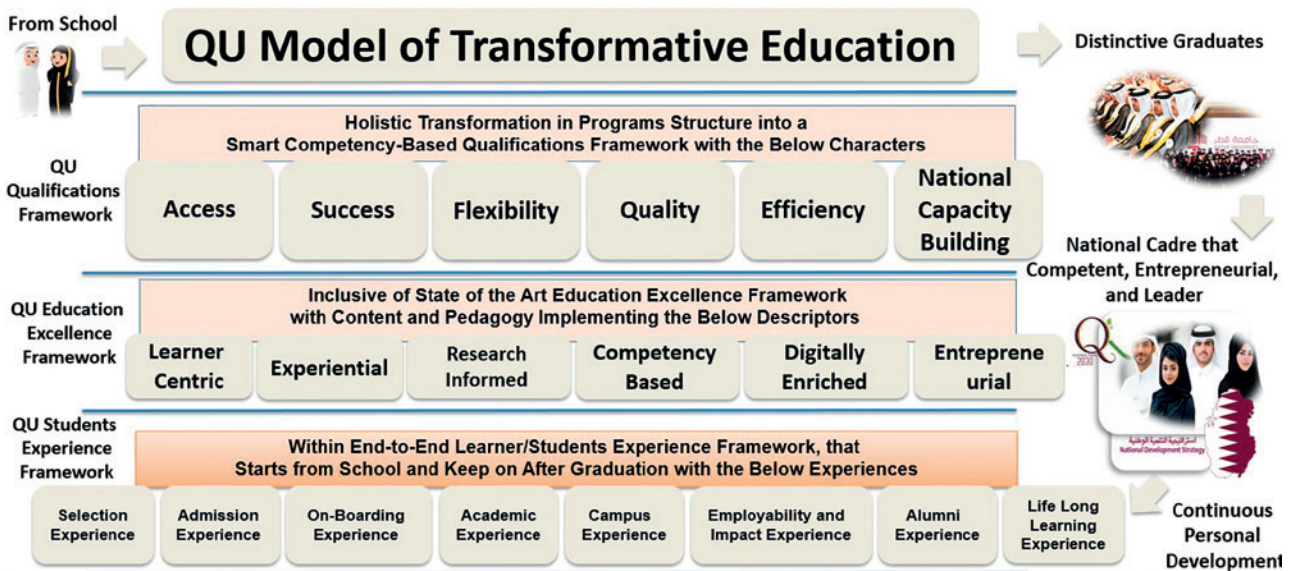
> **"There are numerous reports showing gaps between the educational outcomes of university graduates and the needs of the labour market. In many universities, the curriculum is designed with little input from the labour markets. Several universities in developing countries have adopted the curricula from developed countries that were originally designed for different societies. "**

result in socio-economic impact and development? Is the university a liability for governments where they consume governmental funds only for the sake of education and research? Or are the universities engaged in economic development activities that actually contribute to the national socio-economic development agenda, and hence act as an asset for the country?

Given the emergence of the university's core missions and the key drivers and critical questions outlined above, there is continuous debate on the need to innovate and transform across these missions. Qatar University tried to respond to these challenges by re-questioning the model of public universities through a transformation strategy that is still work in-progress.

For the *educational mission*, the university aimed at maximizing value and impact through a grand outcome focused on graduating competent, ethical, entrepreneurial, and next generation leaders in line with the national development efforts. This grand outcome has been the purpose of the design of a so-called *QU Model of Transformative Education*; it is composed of three main components:

1. QU Competency-Based Qualifications Framework of Smart Architecture

IN FOCUS

From School

QU Model of Transformative Education

Distinctive Graduates

QU Qualifications Framework

Holistic Transformation in Programs Structure into a Smart Competency-Based Qualifications Framework with the Below Characters

| Access | Success | Flexibility | Quality | Efficiency | National Capacity Building |

National Cadre that Competent, Entrepreneurial, and Leader

QU Education Excellence Framework

Inclusive of State of the Art Education Excellence Framework with Content and Pedagogy Implementing the Below Descriptors

| Learner Centric | Experiential | Research Informed | Competency Based | Digitally Enriched | Entrepreneurial |

QU Students Experience Framework

Within End-to-End Learner/Students Experience Framework, that Starts from School and Keep on After Graduation with the Below Experiences

| Selection Experience | Admission Experience | On-Boarding Experience | Academic Experience | Campus Experience | Employability and Impact Experience | Alumni Experience | Life Long Learning Experience |

Continuous Personal Development

2. QU Education Excellence Framework
3. QU End-to-End Learner Experience Framework

For each of the frameworks of the QU Model of Transformative Education, a number of descriptors were defined; **Figure 1** shows a diagram of the QU Model of Transformative Education.

For the ***research mission***, the university focuses on providing science-based sustainable solutions for the national grand challenges. There are a number of considerations by which QU aims to tackle this issue, such as revision of its research priorities, potentially establishing grand research institutes that are modelled around national grand challenges, building stronger relationships with industry and government to identify their issues, and program research streams to solve their issues.

For the ***socio-economic development mission***, a new dual operating model was designed and currently under implementation. This is realized through a twin-structure composed of: first – an internal unit of the university (Office of Strategic Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Economic Development; SIEED Office), and second – an external commercial arm of the university (Qatar University Holding Company; QU Holding). The QU Holding is envisioned to have multiple subsidiaries in the future for various business streams, including but not limited to, technology transfer and commercialization, QU community start-ups support and equity holding, consulting and advisory provision, executive training, etc. The twin-structure SIEED Office & QU Holding enable QU to interface more smoothly with business and industry, forms an emerging innovation & economic development ecosystem in QU, and aims to establish a third core mission focused on socio-economic development complementing the other two core missions of education & research.

Conclusion

There is an ethical, national, and societal urge for public universities to re-question or re-consider their model in a way that will enhance their role and impact on their national or regional ecosystems. QU, as a public university, has passed a process of strategic questioning and re-modelling;it is still in an implementation phase. In its educational mission, the university aims to maximize value and impact through graduating competent, ethical, entrepreneurial, and next-generation leaders of the national development efforts. In the research mission, the university aims at focusing on providing science-based sustainable solutions for the national grand challenges. Furthermore, the university aims to create a third, relatively unique, core mission alongside education and research, focused on innovation and economic development aiming at increasing knowledge-driven economic outcomes that are based on the university's outputs in education & research, and from the knowledge and innovation capabilities of its community.

22 The Future of Higher Education and its Place in Society through the Prism of Health and Allied Sciences
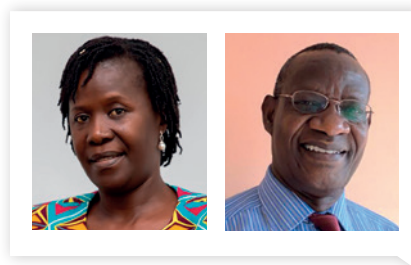
by **Columba Mbekenga**, *Associate Professor and* **Yohana Mashalla**, *Professor, Hubert Kairuki Memorial University, Tanzania*

States regard universities as national think tanks providing strategic leadership in new knowledge generation and developing innovative solutions to societal problems. Institutional objectives of any university include teaching, research and service to society. Universities are thus central for the advancement of knowledge, generation and development of human capital, and innovations aimed at solving societal challenges and sustainable development. In a fast-changing world due to population growth, technological transformations, emerging and re-emerging diseases and increased mobility, the key challenge to universities is how to remain relevant in meeting societal expectations.

The article highlights key challenges experienced by higher education institutions (HEIs), especially in health education, and proposes strategies that would help transform HE institutions in LICs for the future.

The rapid increase in student numbers reflects rapidly growing populations in some countries. In Tanzania, universal primary education is seeing an enrolment of more than ninety percent of children in primary schools and increased transition and completion of secondary education. The number of students qualifying for HE has also increased with negative and positive implications for universities. The increase negatively translates into heavy workloads for existing faculty, need for additional staff, funds, physical space and non-physical infrastructure while upholding the quality of education. Conversely, the increased numbers imply more demand for HE and thus an opportunity to establish new innovative, specialized programmes to meet the diverse educational and health needs of communities.

In many low income countries (LICs), HE is institutionalised and lacks flexibility. It is therefore unable to reach people especially in remote areas and those wishing to combine studies with other social obligations. As such, it is necessary

> " Financing HE is a challenge in LICs where numerous competing priorities and challenges co-exist with limited resources. Limited teaching and learning infrastructure, high operational costs, high tuition fees and limited government subsidies continuously threaten the quality of education and survival of HEIs in these countries. "

to question, how HEIs can transform delivery modes in order to reach as many eligible candidates as possible? Universities should embrace technology in transforming HE to become more accessible and inclusive among the diverse population. Technology has the potential to transcend space and time boundaries enabling HE to become more inclusive. The use of online teaching and hybrid learning provides the needed flexibility and accessibility required. However, in medical education, the practical and clinical aspects are necessary and therefore, blended learning would ensure attainment of the required skills. In LICs, two parallel strands co-exist: technological advancement for some on the one hand and no access to technology for others. Therefore, enhancing access to HE for the underprivileged remains a challenge that requires rethinking of low-cost innovative strategies, including investing in satellite learning centres.

How to transform modes of delivery in HEIs to suit the current emerging and future health challenges is another concern. The key question is "How does academia influence policy and practice; specifically, how does HE close the *knowledge-practice gap*?" For many years, HEIs have been the source of empirical knowledge generated to guide professional practice. However, most of these findings end in scientific journals that are not easily accessible by clinicians and community stakeholders, and they thus have little impact on policy formulation. Engagement and collaboration among academia, clinicians, communities, students and policymakers will more likely foster knowledge creation and translation into policy and practice.

Ensuring appropriate programmes and educational content in alignment with societal transformations are necessary in making HE relevant to communities. In a fast-changing world, HEIs should deliberately ensure that educational content captures societal needs and requirement and their graduates meet societal demands. For example, universities should ensure that both current and emerging health challenges and the capacity to revolutionize the healthcare system are considered and made actionable. Current educational curricula in the health sciences are designed in a non-flexible manner which forces diverse populations of students with different talents, interests and abilities to fit into one-box. This traditional approach does not enthuse innovation and limits learners' ability to take full responsibility for their learning experiences. Curricula should be more interactive, flexible, and embrace learner-centred approaches that empower students to be in-charge of their

learning. Nurturing critical thinking and reasoning, problem solving, and innovativeness should be at the core of any curriculum design to create graduates who will remain relevant in this rapidly changing society.

Financing HE is a challenge in LICs where numerous competing priorities and challenges co-exist with limited resources. Limited teaching and learning infrastructure, high operational costs, high tuition fees and limited government subsidies continuously threaten the quality of education and survival of HEIs in these countries. In order to survive, most universities, especially private institutions, solely depend on student tuition fees, the flow of which may not be guaranteed in settings where the majority of the population is poor. To survive and remain relevant, universities should diversify their sources of funding and include income-generating activities, develop new marketable programmes that attract more students, create investment corridors, adopt flexible delivery modes that reduce faculty workloads, joint-ventures in research, introduce short courses and revamp consultancy services to build more sustainable and independent sources of income.

In conclusion, increased societal demand for HE, limited resources, rigid curricula and modes of delivery are major limitations in accessing HE in LICs. Engagement with stakeholders and development partners to develop marketable curricula and diversify funding sources would more likely increase access to HE.

IN FOCUS

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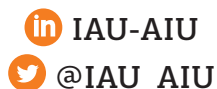
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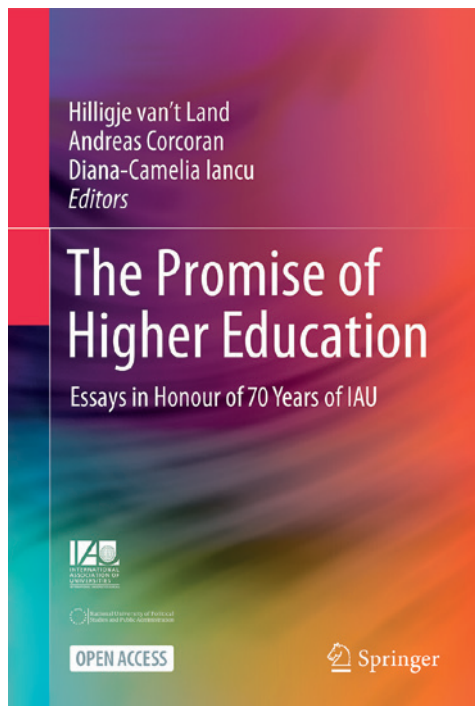Some Basic Statistics on Higher Learning Institutions in Tanzania. Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2021.

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