

**25 January, from 2 pm to 3:30 pm CET- Paris time**

**IAU – Global Cooperation Webinar on Higher education leadership for democracy, sustainability and social justice**

-> This webinar launches the book *“Higher Education Leadership for Democracy, Sustainability and Social Justice”* published by the Council of Europe as part of the *Higher Education Series*. This publication is volume 26 of the series.

Democracy, sustainability and social justice are inextricably linked, and higher education plays an important role in identifying the intrinsic issues within this interplay and helping society devise viable and robust responses. The Covid-19 pandemic both highlighted and contributed to the fragility of democracy. During this period of crisis, the increasing erosion of democratic participation, the deepening of extreme inequities, the strengthening of identity and nationalistic politics, and the promotion of populist anti-intellectualism, involving attacks on science and knowledge itself, all became increasingly visible. This year, half of the world population will be voting in 83 elections. The overall expectation is that the world will be a different place at the end of 2024<sup>1</sup>. In this context, higher education assumes a pivotal role: it can and must do more than develop and disseminate knowledge and understanding. Higher education must influence the way individuals and societies behave.

This is what was debated during the [Global Forum on higher education leadership for democracy, sustainability, and social justice](#) that the Council of Europe; the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy; the Organization of American States; and the International Association of Universities co-organised at Dublin City University in June 2022.

The book that resulted from this Forum gathers chapters from authors from around Europe, the United States, Latin America, Australia and South Africa. The authors agree and together argue that higher education must influence the development of the attitudes, values, and skills that individuals use to shape societies. Higher education has a key role to play for today and tomorrow as a leader of society, and this leadership will be borne of the steps taken within the higher education community for the greater common good.

This upcoming webinar will launch this important publication; authors will present their viewpoints and a discussion with the participants will follow. The book is accessible in Open Access; a link will be shared during the Webinar.

We look forward to welcoming you to this Webinar session on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January.

**OPENING WORDS**

- **Matjaž Gruden**, Director of Democratic Participation at the Council of Europe
- **Ira Harkavy**, Founding Director of the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania
- **Hilligje van’t Land**, Secretary General of the International Association of Universities (IAU)

**SPEAKERS**

- **Sibongile Muthwa**, *Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Nelson Mandela University, South Africa* (TBC)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://time.com/6550920/world-elections-2024/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/09/business/media/election-disinformation-2024.html>

- **Ahmed Bawa**, a theoretical physicist, is Professor at the University of Johannesburg, and former CEO of Universities South Africa (TBC)
- **Renée T. White**, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, The New School, in New York City, and Professor of sociology (TBC)
- **Marcelo Knobel**, Former 12th Rector of the University of Campinas (Unicamp) in Brazil, where he is a Full Professor of Physics
- **Martina Darmanin**, Former President in the European Students Union (ESU) (2021-22) (TBC)
- **Ronaldo Munck**, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for Engaged Research at Dublin City University and a member of the Council of Europe Task Force Higher education leadership for democracy, sustainability and social justice on the local democratic mission of higher education (TBC)

#### **FACILITATOR**

- **Irina Geantă**, Manager, information gathering and curaor of best practices in digital education, European Commission's Digital Education Hub and editorial assistant of the publication that is being launched

#### **Bionotes**

**Matjaž Gruden** is Director of Democratic Participation at the Council of Europe. His responsibilities include Council of Europe activities and programmes in the areas of education, including education for democratic citizenship, youth co-operation, culture and cultural heritage, landscape and biodiversity. The directorate also includes the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists, the Eurimages film fund and the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe. He previously served as Director of Policy Planning, Deputy Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General and political adviser and speechwriter for the Secretary General and President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Prior to his career at the Council of Europe, he was a diplomat at the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, posted in Brussels. He holds a law degree from the University of Ljubljana as well as a postgraduate degree in EU law from the College of Europe in Bruges.

**Ira Harkavy** is Founding Director of the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania. He teaches in history, urban studies and Africana studies, and in the Graduate School of Education. As Netter Director since 1992, Harkavy has helped to develop academically based community service courses as well as participatory action research projects with Penn's local community of West Philadelphia. Harkavy is Chair of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy; Founding Chair of the Anchor Institutions Task Force; Chair of the Paul Robeson House and Museum Board; founder and member of the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND) Steering Committee; and founder and Chair Emeritus of the Coalition for Community Schools. Harkavy has written and lectured widely on urban university–community–school partnerships as well as on the democratic and civic missions of higher education, and has co-authored and co-edited 11 books. Among other honours, Harkavy is the recipient of the New American Colleges and Universities' Ernest L. Boyer Award; Campus Compact's Thomas Ehrlich Faculty Award for Service Learning; the University of Pennsylvania's Alumni Award of Merit; and three honorary degrees. Harkavy received his bachelor's, master's and PhD in History from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Hilligje van't Land** is Secretary General of the International Association of Universities (IAU), the global voice of higher education. For the past two decades, she has fostered the key role of higher

education in societal transformation. Hilligje van't Land strongly believes in the importance of international cooperation and intercultural understanding and has developed multilateral projects related higher education and beyond. She positioned the IAU as key partner in the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy; UNESCO work on Education for sustainable development, the UNESCO Futures of Education initiative and Mission 4.7. She fosters the positioning of higher education as a key stakeholder for the UN Agenda 2030 – Transforming our world. She represents IAU in several working groups and expert committees including at the Council of Europe where she sits on the higher education working group and associated work; she is a member of the Advisory Board of the Higher Education Reform Conferences (HER); Sulitest; the Advisory Committees of two European University Alliances (ERUA and CircleU). Hilligje van't Land holds a PhD in comparative francophone literature, speaks six languages and published on higher education issues of relevance locally and globally.

**Sibongile Muthwa** is Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Nelson Mandela University, South Africa. Leading organisations in the quest for equality and a more socially just world has been the hallmark of her career. She has established a long and distinguished record of guiding large-scale, values-based institutional change in South Africa and internationally, in academia and in development, and in public sector organisations. She is the current Chair of Universities South Africa (USAf), a membership organisation representing the leadership of South Africa's 26 public universities. Before she became Vice-Chancellor and Principal in 2018, Sibongile Muthwa was Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Institutional Support at Nelson Mandela University, and before that she served as Director General of the provincial public service of the Eastern Cape, an administration serving largely rural communities facing economic constraints. Sibongile Muthwa holds an MSc (Social Policy and Planning) from the London School of Economics and a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (now SOAS), University of London.

**Ahmed Bawa**, a theoretical physicist, is Professor at the University of Johannesburg. Until the end of September 2022, he was CEO of Universities South Africa and before this he was Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Durban University of Technology. Until August 2010 he was a faculty member in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Hunter College in the City University of New York. He was also a member of the doctoral faculty at the Graduate Center of the same university. During this period, he was also Associate Provost for Curriculum Development at Hunter College. His areas of interest are high energy physics, higher education studies, and science and society. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa as well as of the Academy of Science of South Africa.

**Renée T. White** is Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at the New School in New York City, where she is also a professor of sociology. Dr White is the co-editor of four books, including the acclaimed *Spoils of war: women of color, cultures, and revolutions* and *Fanon: a critical reader*, and the recently published *Afrofuturism in Black Panther: gender, identity and the re-making of Blackness*. She is also the author of *Putting risk in perspective: Black teenage lives in the era of AIDS*. Dr White is a member of the Editorial Review Board of the *Journal of Women and Gender in Higher Education*. She is on the Advisory Board for *Seeds of Hope*, serves as a Strategic Leader for *VisionForward*, a national coalition working to advance gender equity, and is on the National Advisory Committee for the Rachel Carson Council.

**Marcelo Knobel** was the 12th Rector of the University of Campinas (Unicamp) in Brazil, where he is a Full Professor of Physics. He has held other leadership roles, including: Executive Director of the Unicamp Exploratory Science Museum, Vice-Rector for Undergraduate Programs, Vice-President of the Brazilian Physics Society and Executive Director of the Brazilian Nanotechnology National Laboratory (LNNano). Knobel has already published more than 300 scientific papers, in addition to

numerous opinion pieces in both national and international newspapers and magazines. He is the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Magnetism and Magnetic Materials* (Elsevier). Knobel is an Eisenhower Fellow (2007), Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (2009) and Lemann Fellow (2015). He is a Member of the Governing Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.

**Martina Darmanin** held the office of President in the European Students Union (ESU) in 2021-22, Vice-President in 2020 and Human Rights Coordinator in 2019-20. Her portfolio at ESU focused on equitable access to education, academic freedom, student agency in education governance and international co-operation on education. She is currently the Vice-President of the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLL) and represented the international youth and student constituency in the Global Campaign for Education between 2020 and 2022. Prior to her European engagement she was active as an elected student leader at the local level through the Malta Health Students' Association and at national level on Malta's University Student Council. Martina's academic background is in the field of Health Sciences and she holds a Master of Science degree by research in food studies and environmental health from the University of Malta. She conducted research for her master's degree in partnership with the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Engineering and Bio-economy e.V. (ATB) in Potsdam, Germany. Martina continues to work on research and development within the education policy sector through the Knowledge Innovation Centre.

**Ronaldo Munck** is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for Engaged Research at Dublin City University and a member of the Council of Europe Task Force Higher education leadership for democracy, sustainability and social justice on the local democratic mission of higher education. Professor Munck was the first Head of Civic Engagement at Dublin City University and drove the "third mission" alongside teaching and research, as well as establishing the Irish inter-university platform for civic engagement, Campus Engage. He is currently working with the Organization of American States to establish a Latin American higher education learning network on the democratic mission and civic engagement. As a political sociologist, Professor Munck has written widely on the impact of globalisation on development, changing work patterns and migration. Recent works include *Migration, precarity, and global governance*, *Rethinking development and Social movements in Latin America: mapping the mosaic*. He was a lead author of Amartya Sen's influential International Panel on Social Progress Report, *Rethinking society for the 21st century*

**Irina Geantă** has been involved in higher education policy since 2010. She is a former member of the Romanian BFUG Secretariat (2010-2012), contributing to policy support, including the drafting of the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué. She has been involved as a policy expert in numerous national and European projects focusing on internationalisation, social dimension and digital education, her activities supporting the *StudyinRomania* initiative and related promotional efforts. She co-authored studies and publications for the European Commission and British Council. She is currently part of the international team supporting the implementation of the European Digital Education Hub. She was also involved in the coordination of the Bologna Process Researchers' Conference in 2011, 2014, 2017 and 2020 and contributed to the subsequent Springer publications.