IAU Horizons

International Association of Universities (IAU), founded in 1950, is the leading global association of higher education institutions and university associations. It has over 600 Member Institutions and 30 organisations in some 130 countries that come together for reflection and action on common concerns.

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

IN FOCUS

Leadership for a Sustainable Future – Higher Education and Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals

SAVE THE DATES

IAU 16th General Conference (25-28 Oct. 2022) in Dublin, Ireland

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,

As we finalise this issue of *IAU Horizons*, the world continues to be challenged by the impact of COVID-19 resulting in unprecedented and large social movements on all continents and calling for more equity, justice and inclusion, for transformation of society at large and for education to better respond to the challenges of our world.

Yet, when reading about the outcomes of COP 26, we note that targets hoped for are not met while climate action is needed more than ever. Proper climate action calls for proper education from pre- primary to lifelong learning, through higher education and calls for much stronger engagement for sustainable development in all that we do.

IAU contributes to rethinking the kind of higher education and research that we need in order to rethink the kind of society we want for our future societies to thrive and we do that through our four key priority areas of work and various initiatives we launched in times of the pandemic. Please read about Leadership initiatives; about our work to understand and inform the digital transformation of higher education; about the future of internationalization of higher education and about the strong engagement of the IAU to foster HESD. We do this as well through the series of *Webinars on the Future of Higher Education* that we offer since May 2020. We have welcomed almost two hundred speakers to share their views on some 50 broader topics relating to the transformation of higher education today. All webinars are available online on the IAU website and the IAU YouTube channel and invite you to use these in your universities to spark further debate. Let me thank all speakers for their wonderful contributions to the debates again this year. More is to come.

In the *In Focus* section of this issue, we share 34 contributions from university leaders from all five continents, from associations and organizations, including student organization on *Leadership for a sustainable future – Higher education and Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals*. We invite you to share the papers broadly in your own networks. We have to step up our action together.

As well, UNESCO just held its 41st General Conference and IAU has taken part in all education related meetings. We are pleased to congratulate Audrey Azoulay for her reelection as Director General of UNESCO and will be pleased to continue to contribute to the vision, mission and work of this key multilateral organization in the years to come. The Conference saw the Global Education meeting and the adoption of the Paris Declaration calling governments to increase investment in education especially now that education I needed to move us beyond the crisis; the adoption of two important normative instruments, one on Open Science and the other on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence; and the launch of the Report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education *'Reimagining our Futures Together – a New Social Contract for Education'*. IAU was pleased to contribute to these achievements.

2022 will be marked by further debate and in particular by the preparation for the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC 2022), the IAU strategic plan 2022-2030 and the IAU 16th General Conference. We look forward to working with you on these and to welcoming you on board IAU activities and initiatives in the year ahead.

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IAU Horizons 26.2 – Contents

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IAU EVENTS

IAU STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

IAU KNOWLEDGE HUB

IN FOCUS:

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IAU EVENTS

TAKE PART IN THE IAU WEBINAR SERIES: THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
TUESDAYS FROM (13:30-15:00 UTC/GMT)

IAU is pleased to offer an international online space for exchange on different topics on a weekly basis. The global webinar series first started in May 2020 in response to the lockdown during the pandemic. Today, it has developed into a continued service offered to the IAU Members and the HE community at large. It offers a unique opportunity to meet across regions and discuss topics of concern to higher education. Tune in on Tuesdays (13:30-15:00 UTC/GMT) to be part of the conversation during the live sessions or visit the IAU YouTube channel to catch up on these important exchanges. In this global series we cover a range of different topics: from leadership to sustainable development; from digital transformation to internationalization; from academic freedom to new developments in academic publishing and Open Science among others. We are pleased to co-organize some of the sessions with our partners.

IAU Members are encouraged to send proposals for topics to be debated and to suggest speakers who can contribute to the conversations.

IAU AT THE UNESCO WORLD HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE (WHEC)
Reinventing Higher Education for a Sustainable Future
HYBRID EVENT FROM 18-20 MAY 2022 IN BARCELONA, SPAIN AND ONLINE

At the IAU, Members are preparing for the upcoming and third UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC). It will take place as a hybrid event, expecting some 2000 participants in Barcelona, Spain and many more to participate online from 18-20 May 2022. IAU has been a key partner to the first two World Conferences (1998 & 2009), and will again represent the global voice of higher education during the next edition.

The UNESCO WHEC 2022 will take place at a particularly important moment in time heavily marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, which abruptly disrupted higher education.

Over time, the very idea of the university was overwhelmingly campus-based and relied on physical presence for intellectual exchange among students and staff, whether in classrooms, lecture halls or conferences. Libraries and laboratories were shared learning and research spaces with common use and access to books and resources, equipment and materials; social gatherings were a defining feature of campus life, spanning all activities from teaching & learning, research to extra-curricular activities, including conferencing, and student life in dormitories. From one day to the next, universities had to start operating remotely – where possible –, and many are still continuing operations from a distance. This sudden shift demonstrated the ability of universities to be agile, to respond to emergent challenges and to innovate. Driven by the shared ambition to minimize the negative effects of the pandemic on academia and its operations, the higher education community has worked relentlessly to adopt innovative solutions. Many measures in place today are specifically a response to the pandemic, but although it is not clear when we will move beyond this state of play, it is clear that this experience will have an impact on the future of higher education, the question is how?

The ambition of the WHEC is to generate a Higher Education Roadmap (HED 2030) and guidelines for action within the frame of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

IAU contributes to the WHEC, in particular on themes related to its own strategic priorities, namely Internationalisation, Sustainable Development and Digital Transformation. IAU is engaged in a series of UNESCO projects, including on Lifelong Learning (with UIL, IIEP, IESALC, AAU and EUA) and Sustainable Development (with the International Science Council and the University of Bergen). With UIL we conducted a global survey on the role of higher education

in the development of lifelong learning dynamics; with ISC, we supported the UiB – UNESCO Expert Group of Universities (EGU) which develop a Report on ESD. IAU will position the World Higher Education Database (WHED) as a key instrument for the implementation of the *UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications*. The forthcoming *Second Global Survey Report on the Impact of the Covid-19 on Higher Education around the World* will also inform the Conference. As well, in consultation with its Members around the world, IAU is preparing a position paper outlining essential issues and principles to be considered for the outcome document and Road Map for higher education. Members will be informed about the different initiatives and opportunities for engagement.

IAU 16th GENERAL CONFERENCE
Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society
25-28 OCTOBER 2022 IN DUBLIN, IRELAND

The IAU looks forward to welcoming its Members and beyond to the 16th IAU General Conference scheduled to take place 25-28 October 2022. One year prior to the event, the travel protocols for entering Ireland for the time of the conference are uncertain, but hopefully it will be possible to convene an *in person* event in Dublin, Ireland. Please sign up for our monthly Newsletter to receive the most recent updates about the developments and possibilities for engagement. The call for proposals is expected to open in February 2022 and we look forward to offering a stimulating programme with wide participation from all regions of the world.

In the meantime, we are pleased to open a call for expressions of interest to become candidate to stand for election for the IAU Administrative Board.

Chaired by the IAU President, the Administrative Board is composed of 20 members (18 heads of Member institutions & 2 heads of Member organizations). Deputy members are also elected. The Administrative Board represents the Membership in the different regions of the world.

It meets annually prior to the Association's annual conference, ensures that decisions of the General Conference are implemented and guides the work of the IAU Secretariat. Some of its work is carried out through specific committees and working groups.

Joining the IAU Administrative Board offers a unique opportunity to engage with peers from around the world, become actively engaged in shaping the Association and to debate issues of concern to the present and future of higher education.

⊕ Learn more about the IAU events, contact:
Trine Jensen (t.jensen@iau-aiu.net)

⊕ Learn more about the functions of the Administrative Board and what it takes to become a candidate, contact:
Nicholas Poulton (n.poulton@iau-aiu.net)

IAU ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ITS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Values-based Leadership

Leadership is a core aspect of quality higher education, vital in enabling institutions to respond to complex challenges and rapid societal change. Higher education leadership must be underpinned by values and responsibility. Leadership must be adaptable and constantly evolve to ensure always more equity. It is essential that higher education institutions fully contribute to the development of sustainable and democratic societies.

LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

As part of the strategic priority Values-based Leadership, IAU fosters exchanges of ideas and experiences between university leaders to identify the challenges of our time, suggest how higher education might address and surmount them, and inspire ways forward. The question 'what kind of university for what kind of society' has received new urgency in light of the pandemic and other major societal and technological transformations.

The following are six theses distilled from the rich exchanges in the IAU webinar series *The Future of Higher Education* and more particularly the sessions with a focus on leadership – bringing together university leaders and higher education scholars from around the world. We welcomed twenty-six excellent speakers from all continents for vibrant exchanges on crucial aspects of the state of higher education and its future. For the sake of brevity, we have condensed the main points into these brief theses.

1. Universities stay true to tradition – through change

Universities are traditional and modern, conservative and progressive, inclusive and exclusive, innovative and defensive; they have ring-faced their institution and built-up defences over centuries of existence against alien norms. At the same time, however, they are extremely adaptive to societal expectations and changes in the environment.

This is especially true in light of the pandemic. In certain aspects, universities have accelerated a process of innovation and change in a rapidly evolving context as they have had to grapple with volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environments that warrant restructured workplaces, redefined roles of rapid learning, adjustments to its business model, rationalising its teaching and research agenda – all to preserve

its relevance and societal mission as the engine of teaching, research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Blended and online learning yield fantastic opportunities and have boosted stakeholders to re-imagine higher education.

2. The value proposition of universities needs to evolve in a changing world

A utilitarian approach to higher education can no longer be limited to catering to the needs of a knowledge economy, driven by science and technology alone. The pandemic and other societal transformations have revealed an ethical crisis that the universities must address more clearly and forcefully. Issues of inequality, access, social justice, human rights and citizenship have shown that the viability of society is at stake and that universities cannot contend themselves with the formation and focus on one particular social segment alone.

Universities are powerful drivers of social transformation and development. Yet an excessive focus on natural sciences is holding the universities back from unleashing their potential to address social and cultural challenges more vehemently. To demonstrate its relevance for shaping public policy, discourse

and analysis must encompass and include the social sciences and humanities for a more nuanced approach to ethical, social, ethical and cultural dimensions of our time. This will help develop a humanistic culture, social cohesion and solidarity, not least a vivid public sphere.

Universities are prompted to inform the process of recovery and development by taking a balanced approach to society: one where economic growth and social cohesion goes hand in hand, not one where economic growth is carried out on the back of social disintegration. Universities must actively and convincingly demonstrate and communicate that they are part of overcoming social inequalities, not part of the cause of it. They need to act with a collective voice.

3. Public funding in higher education is an investment not an expenditure

The public has recognised that universities, individually and collectively, play a formidable role in fighting the virus on behalf of society and that higher education must be part and parcel of the recovery. The pandemic has shown that universities have done much to overcome a rise in epistemic scepticism, which, in conjunction with increasingly populist and nationalist policies, tries to cast doubt on the validity of higher education as trusted places of knowledge and research. Funding of higher education has shown to be a viable investment in risk-mitigation. But universities must communicate more effectively towards a global narrative about the place of universities in society and their relevance for public funding and investment. While carrying out ever more with less in recent years, universities have had to mitigate a massive expansion of student enrolment and provision of courses while seeing a substantial growth in knowledge production in research. Universities are becoming increasingly aware that public funding requires them to share their knowledge more effectively and inclusively.

4. Leading through uncertainty means leading with purpose

The pandemic has shown the organisational strengths and weaknesses of universities. Effective and reassuring communication in times of crisis hold the university together. Swift decision-making, team work, empowerment and trust in the capabilities of staff is important and clear visibility of

leadership essential. The concept of leadership is undergoing a more organic metamorphosis with new alliances being forged and responsibilities shared. Greater empowerment of staff on all hierarchy levels increases the sense of purpose and belonging. Clear communication channels are required for feedback to avoid duplicities, misunderstandings and conflicting outcomes. Rather than being overwhelmed, leadership has to shape the conversation and focus on the essential pieces in order to maintain the core mission of knowledge provision and research. To balance and override the negativities associated with the crisis requires leadership to provide hope and a post-pandemic vision for all.

5. The business model needs to be re-imagined for more meaningful international cooperation

With the expectation to do more with less we need to reimagine the business model of higher education. The current models do not fully address the needs of society and need to be adjusted. All the major challenges are global in character and require institutional capacities and human capabilities to overcome them. Local problems are often global in consequence and require a global conversation. The higher education sector thus needs to engage in a meaningful and system-wide discussion on fair access, knowledge circulation and how to cooperate, rationalise and synergise more to share institutional resources globally – from libraries, human resources, intellectual property to joint online tuition and courses.

6. What is a good university?

Society is prompting universities to expand their conception of quality. How good are they really? Universities need to engage beyond traditional indicators and an economic narrative and show how good they are for society, their local community, future generations, the world. Are they doing well, or are they also doing good? Good universities empower both, the individual and community, to flourish and accompany new generations in becoming full human beings leading a purposeful deploying their capacities to help society go forward. Good universities help students to gain expertise in their field, but foster reflective and critical habits of mind, empathy, skills of collaboration, listening, taking action for social good. New generations are asking these powerful institutions of knowledge to expand traditional measures of quality a greater focus on creating a better world on an equitable and ethical basis.

GET INVOLVED

➲ **Discover the full set of conversations on higher education leadership in the recordings of the webinars on the IAU website and stay tuned for upcoming sessions:**
https://www.iau-aiu.net/IAU-Webinar-Series-on-the-Future-of-Higher-Education-929

Please send us suggestions for additional themes you wish addressed on the topic of leadership.

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.

INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGIES IN THE (POST) COVID ERA

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, between February and June 2021, IAU conducted the second edition of its Global Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on higher education around the world. With 496 replies from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) based in 112 countries and territories, it was possible to conduct a regional analysis in four regions categorized as: Africa, the Americas, Asia & Pacific and Europe. The data was furthermore analysed to compare the results between private and public HEIs. It was a comprehensive survey touching upon various aspects of higher education, and included several questions on internationalization analysed here.

Figure 1. *Has your institution revised its internationalization strategy due to the pandemic?*
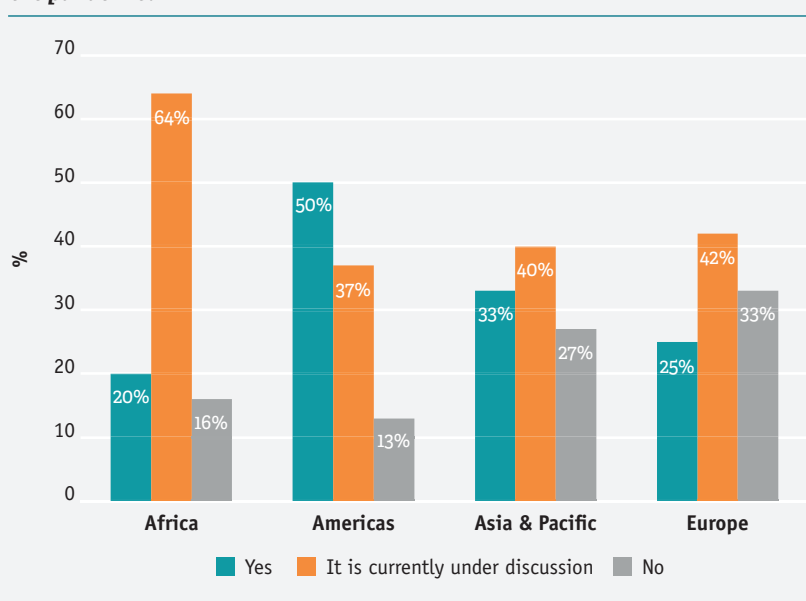
Changes in internationalization strategies due to the pandemic

Considering the impact of the pandemic on internationalization strategies within HEIs, it is interesting to note that almost all HEIs report having an internationalization strategy, only 9% do not have one. There is no difference between public and private HEIs. At regional level, only 1% of HEIs in Europe do not have an internationalization strategy, while in the other three regions this percentage is between 12% (in Asia & Pacific) and 16% (in the Americas).

Considering only those HEIs that have an internationalization strategy, the percentages of those having revised it due to the pandemic versus those who have not are similar (31% against 26%). However, the highest percentage of HEIs are currently discussing its revision (43%).

Private HEIs seem to be more reactive, 41% have already revised their internationalization strategy compared to 24% of public HEIs and only 20% have not, compared to 30% of public. However, this latter result could also mean that public HEIs have been less affected by the pandemic in their internationalization processes than private

ones, and therefore do not feel the need to change their internationalization strategy.

At regional level, American HEIs are the most reactive, half of them have revised their internationalization strategies, while African HEIs are the least, only 20% did so, while 64% of them are currently discussing its revision. However, it is in Europe where the biggest percentage of HEIs that have not revised their internationalization strategy can be found (33%) **(Figure 1)**.

Priorities in the revised internationalization strategies

HEIs that replied that they revised or are planning to revise their internationalization strategy because of the pandemic were asked to evaluate if the prioritization of different internationalization activities would change in the revised internationalization strategy.

HEIs were asked to evaluate the following activities:

- ■ Attraction of international students
- ■ Student exchanges

- Virtual exchanges and collaborative online learning
- Internationalization of the curriculum/at home
- Academic staff mobility for teaching
- Academic and administrative staff training in global and intercultural competences

All activities are present in the internationalization strategies of about 90% of HEIs. At these universities, the results show that virtual exchange and collaborative online learning increased in 81% of HEIs. This is by far the activity which has been prioritised at the majority of HEIs. Internationalization of the curriculum/at home has also grown in importance at the majority of HEIs (58%).

For other activities the situation is more diverse, with three different groups of HEIs which can be identified, those for which the activity has increased in importance due to the pandemic, those for which the level of importance has not changed and those for which the level of importance has decreased.

The results for the attraction of international students are particularly interesting, as they show that despite the new 'barriers' created by the pandemic, the percentage of HEIs for which the importance of attracting international students has increased (37%) is higher than the one of HEIs for which this importance has decreased (25%).

The negative effect of the pandemic is more visible for student exchanges (39% decrease vs. 26% increase) and for academic staff mobility for teaching (37% vs. 26%).

The private/public nature of HEIs does not seem to play a major role, the trends are similar for all activities. Overall, there are no marked differences between regions: the importance of virtual exchanges and collaborative online learning and internationalization of the curriculum/at home has increased at the majority of HEIs in all regions. As it is the case at the global level, in all regions and for all other activities, inequality is clearly visible with three different groups of HEIs present and this is clearly the most relevant result.

Conclusion

The pandemic had indeed an effect on internationalization strategies at the majority of HEIs, but one year into the pandemic, this has not necessarily resulted in a change of strategy yet. At those HEIs where the priorities did change, it clearly stimulated an increase in importance of virtual exchanges and collaborative online learning and internationalization of the curriculum/at home, as expected given the context, but for what concerns mobility the effect is mixed with three different groups of HEIs clearly identifiable.

This situation is worth a reflection, as on one hand the increased importance of virtual exchanges, collaborative online learning and internationalization of the curriculum/at home would help reducing inequality in internationalization by reaching out to more students, but at the same time, the fact that student and staff mobility remain important only at some HEIs would increase inequality.

GET INVOLVED

⮌ Need support to plan, evaluate and revise your internationalization strategy and activities? ISAS (2.0) is there for you!

As seen in the previous article, the pandemic is generating a re-evaluation of internationalization strategies around the world. The process of revising an internationalization strategy is complex and needs the support of the whole academic community. A consultation inside the institution is vital for the successful creation of a new internationalization strategy. The process of revising and creating a new internationalization strategy would also enormously benefit from an external view:

1. External experts bring different perspectives and suggest solutions already implemented at other institutions which can be the answer to local problems;

2. The consultation process with external experts breaks down the hierarchical barriers, the different stakeholders inside the institution feel freer to talk to external experts and share their point of view than doing that internally, allowing for a more comprehensive revision of internationalization at your institution.

This external support is exactly what is 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 is and whatever the stage of implementation of internationalization is.

17 HEIs from all continents of the world already undertook an ISAS (2.0) and they share very positive feedback on the service in the *ISAS impact evaluation study and report,* which you can download from the IAU website (https://iau-aiu. net/IMG/pdf/isas_report-compressed.pdf)

If the Covid-19 pandemic forced your institution to consider revising its internationalization strategy and you need support, remember that at whatever point in the internationalization journey your institution is, there is an ISAS (2.0) service to help you!

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

IAU STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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 fosters actions for sustainability in support of *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the related Sustainable Development Goals.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

How to understand the need to act now

The call for sustainable transformations in the higher education community is strong, and the UN decade of action for the SDGs presents an opportunity to act, a chance to build forward in a sustainable way.

The American economist, Milton Friedman, wrote in the 1980s: *"Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around."* This is more relevant than ever. Taking action is easier said than done when considering global systems and the complexity of initiating processes of change. The climate crisis is without doubt one, if not the biggest challenge humanity is facing in the 21st century. It affects all people, countries, sectors and areas of life, though to varying degrees. Thus, for a crisis of this scope to be addressed, we need effective strategies to adapt and respond, resilience, and strong leadership.

The latest assessment report, released in August 2021 by the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC), the United Nations body assessing the science related to climate change, confirms that urgent action is required to limit global warming to +1.5 degrees Celsius.[1] The message is clear: we need to act now to get somewhere close to the targets set in Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement, amongst other important texts leading the way. Reacting to this IPCC report, UN Secretary General António Guterres stressed that we need to "combine forces now" and we have "no time for delay and no room for excuses."[2] Partnership with higher education should be at the centre of these joint efforts.

With citizens increasingly putting pressure on governments to act on climate action and *26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties* (COP26) in Glasgow (in November 2021), it is of utmost importance for the higher education sector to support the call for stricter policies and more meaningful action.

Universities are contributing in various ways, and are already a step ahead – not just when it comes to *SDG13: Climate Action*, but also in teaching, research and accelerating action towards all of the 17 interlinked Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Change is needed and is already happening – but how can we positively influence this change and contribute to a more sustainable future? The "how" is where options and possible pathways diverge, and thus strong leadership is crucial for collective action. How then, to define the role of "leadership" or what a "leader" should stand for in the context of sustainability in higher education?

How to define "leadership" and actors involved

Firstly, it is not solely the university leadership at the top, meaning the chancellor/vice-Chancellor/ president of an institution who is (to get) on board. In many cases, initiatives and their successful development and implementation come from bottom-up processes that involve staff, students and all members of the (university) community. This understanding is closely linked to the Whole Institution Approach (WIA)[3] developed by IAU and others in the context of the *UNESCO Global Action Program (2015-2019)*; it aims to foster a holistic understanding of the institution and all its members, uses an

1. Full report and additional information https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/

2. As cited here: https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-58130705 (9 August 2021)

3. See https://en.unesco.org/globalactionprogrammeoneducation

interdisciplinary lens and breaks up silos. The indicators IAU uses to identify a 'Whole Institution Approach' are:

1. Sustainable development included in Mission and Vision (for example embedded in a strategic plan)
2. Specific budget allocation for sustainable development
3. Inclusion of sustainable development in all dimensions of an HEI (Teaching, Research, Community Engagement, Campus Initiatives)
4. Engagement of the entire higher education community and leadership
5. Creation or use of assessment tools and reporting mechanisms

Data from the *2nd IAU Survey Report on HESD*[4] show that leadership is not only in a powerful position to initiate change and adopt and implement a WIA for SD, but also already much engaged with sustainable development at HEIs (See the Report). A next comprehensive IAU Survey on HESD will be conducted in 2022.

There are many examples of successful leadership initiatives for sustainability at universities (the *In Focus section* of this issue of *IAU Horizons* will provide many good and scalable examples). For instance, a recent webinar on Leadership for sustainable development, organized by IAU and UNICA, presented approaches from universities from Canada, Cyprus, Columbia and Finland. Experts agree that a strong leadership, strategy and involving as many stakeholders as possible within an institution are key for maximizing impact. Other examples for leading the way to a more sustainable university include the *Green Office Movement*, projects to advance Climate Education

such as MECCE[5], the UNEP framework for a more sustainable university[6].

Furthermore, the dynamics of *the IAU Global Cluster on HESD*[7] encourages action on the different SDGs; 16 universities lead one of the 16 subclusters. They, in turn, work with a network of "satellite" universities on different projects around "their" SDG. The Cluster facilitates cooperation across all continents, peer-to-peer learning, joint events and the sharing of best practices for sustainability.

How to mobilize for action: IAU HESD

Advocacy is crucial to bring leaders and the whole university on board. Therefore, IAU is informing its Members not only on current SD topics, but also actively engaging them in webinars, publications and projects. The *UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development*, which took place virtually from Berlin in May 2021, as well as the *UN High-Level Political Forum 2021* in July were key moments to advocate for higher education's unique position linking research, education and community action. The Berlin Declaration[8], adopted at the UNESCO WC-ESD, strongly calls for governments to include ESD into education plans and curricula at all levels, and to increase funding to support this process. Both activities on the macro-level, and projects on the micro-level are needed.

To conclude, while there is no "one size fits all solution" on the way to a more sustainable university and future, the key role of leadership fostering a whole institution approach, but also encouraging and strengthening initiatives from the university community, are leading to transformative action. Reinforcing these transformation processes is what is needed for an equal and sustainable future for all.

4. Mallow, S., Toman, I., and van't Land, H. (2020). *2nd IAU Survey Report on HESD: Higher Education and the 2030 Agenda: Moving into the 'Decade of Action and Delivery for the SDGs*. International Association of Universities (IAU), p.38. Available at: https://www.iau-hesd.net/sites/default/files/documents/iau_hesd_survey_report_final_jan2020.pdf

5. http://www.iau-hesd.net/news/5028-iau-partner-mecce-project.html
6. http://www.iau-hesd.net/news/5289-unep-launches-sustainable-university-framework.html
7. http://iau-hesd.net/contenu/4648-iau-global-cluster-hesd.html
8. https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-declares-environmental-education-must-be-core-curriculum-component-2025-0

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 about IAU's involvement at the UN High Level Political Forum 2021 and UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (WC-ESD) 2021: HLPF** https://iau-aiu.net/HESD?onglet=3 / **UNESCO WC ESD:** https://www.iau-hesd.net/news/5170-recording-available-iau-session-unesco-world-conference-putting-esd-action-higher

➔ **Read the latest IAU HESD Cluster Report 2019-2020** https://www.iau-aiu.net/IMG/pdf/clusterhesd_iau_report_2020.pdf

➔ **Learn from the leadership examples shared in the *In Focus* section of this issue of the magazine**

➔ **Engage with IAU on twitter** @IAU_HESD **and share the IAU work on 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.

A YEAR OF CHANGE AND A QUESTION OF ACCESS

In January 2020, IAU launched the report entitled *Higher Education in the Digital Era: The Current State of Transformation Around the World* based on a survey conducted in 2019. When we published this report, we were unaware of the extent to which the world would change only a few months later; how much higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world would become reliant – as never before – on digital technologies to continue their operations, when physical distancing became the main tool to fight the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the start of the pandemic, IAU has conducted two *Global Surveys on the Impact of the Pandemic on Higher Education Around the World*. The first one at its outset, from March to April 2020, and a second, more comprehensive one, from February to June 2021.

Eighteen months into the pandemic, and our hopes now lie with the many vaccine campaigns being implemented, gradually but unequally, both in terms of provision or uptake. As of 1 September 2021, 39.5% of the world population had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, but if we look at low-income countries, the rate stands at 1.7%.[9] It is clear that the pandemic is not yet over and that it will take time before the world opens up. At the same time it is an interesting moment to look at a few examples from the various IAU global reports to note to what extent higher education has changed within such a short timeframe.

In the 2019 survey on digital transformation, more than half of all institutions (56%) reported that less than 25% of their courses were offered online. For nearly a third (31%) of institutions, it was less than 5%, while 20% indicated that they did not offer any online courses. In terms of blended or hybrid learning, 41% of respondents reported that less than 25% of their courses made use of blended or hybrid learning opportunities, and only 6% confirmed that hybrid or blended learning formed part of more than 75% of the courses offered. So, whether online or blended learning, it was very clear that

9. https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations (1 September 2021)

in 2019 these modes of delivery were very marginal within institutions around the world.

In 2021, 89% of HEIs stated they provided remote teaching and learning (T&L). The questions were phrased differently so do not allow for direct comparison, but it still shows a clear indication that the pandemic has forced (due to restrictions linked to Covid-19) institutions to rely on remote T&L to a degree never experienced before in the history of higher education.

This shift was borne out of necessity rather than choice, motivated by the need to prevent even more disruption to higher education, and to not jeopardize the learning trajectories of students around the world. If the situation was similar in many countries as the pandemic unfolded, the conditions and infrastructures already in place and allowing to move to remote operations were very diverse and unequal according to the data from the 2019 survey on digital transformation.

As an example, one question looked at assessing the digital infrastructure; here Africa and Europe represent the two extremes and are therefore used as examples, with the other regions appearing somewhere between these two extremes. In Africa 36% reported that digital infrastructure was a significant obstacle to pursuing digital transformation with 29% reporting that it is not an obstacle. In Europe, on the other hand, only 7% reported digital infrastructure as a significant obstacle, while 68% reported that it is not an obstacle. This is just one example in the report that shows the inequalities in digital transformation at the beginning of the pandemic. Yet, this was

the starting point just before the Covid-19 crisis hit, hence forcing institutions to pivot online.

The first *IAU Global Survey Report on the Impact of Covid-19 on Higher Education* also confirmed these important disparities among HEIs and their capacity to shift to remote teaching and learning. For example, only 29% of African HEIs were able to quickly move T&L online, compared to 85% of HEIs in Europe at that moment in time. However, it is positive to see that one year into the pandemic, the situation has improved as we now see that 89% of HEIs globally offer remote T&L and only 11% do not.

When looking at the regional breakdown, Europe and Africa still represent the extremes compared to the other regions. In Europe 92% of HEIs offer remote T&L while the rate drops to 82% in Africa: while the divide still exists, it is not as great as in the previous reports. The data does not allow us to measure the proportion of remote learning to campus-based learning within an institution, and even if we had this data, it would be extremely difficult to compare as the different waves of the pandemic have been occurring at different times from country to country and from region to region.

The institutions that confirmed providing remote T&L were furthermore asked to report how many of their students they are able to reach out to. The average percentage coming out of this is 86% of students globally. This is a rather positive result, although it implies a potentially worrisome situation for the remaining 14% of students. Yet, there is reason to be optimistic about the fact that such a big share of the student population has access to T&L at a time where it continues to be provided remotely in many countries.

Discrepancies still do exist when looking at the data per region. If we consider only the data from European institutions, the outreach to students grows to 92% whereas it decreases to 74% in Africa. In other words, while 8 out of 100 students are likely to have missed out on remote T&L in Europe, it increases to 26 students out of 100 in Africa. Furthermore, the data also show that a bigger proportion of HEIs in Europe reach out to 100% of their students (39% of HEIs) whereas only 14% of institutions in Africa have the same outreach. In the same manner, very few institutions (2%) in Europe indicate reaching out to less than 50% of their students, whereas this increases to 24% of institutions in Africa.

So, while the situation has improved compared to the one a year ago, the data still reveal very divergent and unequal situations across and within the regions. This is a clear indication of how the pandemic is reinforcing existing inequalities. When combining this picture with the situation of the gross enrollment ratio for tertiary education recorded by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) for 2019[10], we see that in Europe 73% of the population in the 5-year age group immediately following upper secondary education are enrolled in higher education, compared to only 9% for sub-Saharan Africa.

While it is positive to see improvements have been made within this year of change, when looking at the big picture, it still means that the student population, already very small in Africa, is potentially at a higher risk of losing out on higher education compared to a much larger student population in Europe.

We have all been part of a global experiment for digital transformation of higher education during this pandemic, the question is how to use this experience to shape the future in a positive way. What we see now one year into the pandemic does not necessarily reflect what the situation will be in a post-pandemic world, where the use of online and blended learning will be one of choice rather than necessity. However, digital infrastructures are being expanded within HEIs around the world, opening up new opportunities and providing more flexibility when it comes to T&L. The world is becoming increasingly digital and while we should rejoice that this allows us to collaborate more easily beyond borders, the prerequisites for taking part in the transformation are connectivity and online access. These issues were already a major concern before the pandemic, but this has been exacerbated by the health crisis. It is thus time to officially recognize that in a knowledge society where information is increasingly available digitally, connectivity and online access must become a basic human right.

- Higher Education in the Digital Era: The Current State of Transformation around the World (2019)
- The Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education around the World (First Global Survey 2020)
- The Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education around the World (Second Global Survey Forthcoming)

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10. http://data.uis.unesco.org (Accessed on 10 August)

GET INVOLVED

⊙ Innovative Education for Unshaped Futures (IE4UF)
Discover the IAU & UOC series discussing digital transformation and its impact on the futures of higher education.
See the IAU YouTube channel.

⊙ Innovative Doctoral Course For Sustainability (IDOCOS)
A project leveraging the potential of digital technologies to strengthen international collaboration through co-creation and sharing of doctoral courses.
See more on the IAU website.
For more information, please contact: Trine Jensen at t.jensen@iau-aiu.net

IAU KNOWLEDGE HUB

IAU WORLD HIGHER EDUCATION DATABASE (WHED)

In collaboration with:

Since its foundation by UNESCO in 1950, the IAU has been mapping the higher education landscape around the world; it currently does so through the WHED – the World Higher Education Database (www.whed.net) which lists information on 20,000 accredited higher education institutions and 196 national education systems in the world.

THE GO-TO PARTNER FOR IDENTIFYING ACCREDITED HEIs THROUGH UNIQUE WHED IDENTIFIERS

National higher education authorities, government agencies and/or national academic bodies worldwide recognize WHED as the official source of information on HEIs. Now more than ever as the *Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications* was adopted by the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2019, making it the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global scope. The IAU has accompanied the long process towards adopting this multilateral milestone and collective move towards democratizing knowledge, enabling a more fluid circulation of talent while fostering global trust in diverse and complementary higher education systems.

WHED is a key resource for the practical implementation of the Global Convention. The Convention calls upon the State Parties

to "Facilitate the dissemination of and access to accurate information on the other States Parties' higher education systems, qualifications, and qualifications giving access to higher education." The IAU's WHED provides exactly that: authoritative higher education information on a global scale.

But the WHED data is useful in many ways beyond the field of qualifications recognition: HE networks, researchers, students, international NGOs and the private sector draw on WHED data. For instance, an increasing number of users have integrated the WHED lists into their own recruitment systems and data sets to facilitate their human resource management.

New partnerships through the integration of the Global WHED ID

Since rolling out a new system of unique identifiers for each higher education institution (HEI) listed, the WHED has gained additional importance in the digitalisation of higher education. This unique digital code 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 and is opening the door to new exciting partnerships: To name but two, the WHED will be the underlying data for the first blockchain project in the world of recognition called Diplo*me* and launched at the EXPO 2020 in Dubai this year in cooperation with CIMEA; ETER – European Tertiary Education Registry has integrated the WHED ID in its wide European HE data set as a useful tool for researchers.

WHED UPDATES AND NEWS

The European region was successfully updated in 2020. As shown in the graph, the number of accredited HEIs in Europe have increased significantly over the past 30 years from some 800 HEIs in 1991 to nearly 4000 HEIs in 2021 **(see Figure 2)**. The Russian Federation, France, Germany and Poland stand out as having the largest number of institutions in this region. This year the WHED team is updating information about Latin American and the Caribbean.

Figure 2. *Evolution of the number of accredited European HEIs on 20 years*

New IAU Publications

The promise of higher education: Essays in Honour of 70 Years of IAU
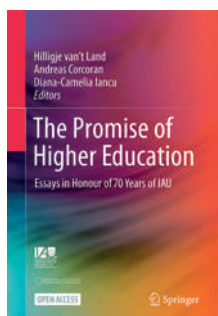
This collection of short essays, accessible through open access, takes the interested reader on a tour across the global higher education landscape and addresses pertinent themes and challenges in higher education. To mark the 70th anniversary of the International Association of Universities (IAU) and its role in higher education since 1950, experts from around the world share their insights into higher education's recent past, present and future. The book is divided into six parts: *70 years of Higher Education Cooperation and Advocacy; Facilitating International Cooperation; Coding the Values; The Changing Landscape; The Promise of Education; Opening up – The Future of Higher Education*. Get your free copy online and share it in your networks: https://link. springer.com/book/10.1007% 2F978-3-030-67245-4

Second Global Survey Report on the Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Higher Education around the World (forthcoming)

IAU conducted its second *Global survey on the Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Higher Education around the World* one year into the pandemic (February to June 2021). The second edition was a comprehensive survey considering both Governance, Teaching & Learning, Research and Community/Societal engagement. Developed in collaboration with a working group with members from different regions, it received responses from 496 institutions in 112 countries and territories around the world. The report provides a picture of the impact of the pandemic on higher education one year into the pandemic and compares the situation among regions and among public and private institutions. It will be made available on the IAU website.

Higher Education Policy (HEP) – IAU's quarterly, peer-reviewed research journal

June issue of HEP (34/2) was a collection of papers looking at, amongst others, global and peripheral identities in knowledge production in Latin America, US public Master's degree-awarding institutions, mainland Chinese students in Taiwan, HE projects in Nepal, academic action and triple-helix dynamics in South Korea, and refugee access to post-secondary education in the US. The full contents and abstracts can be found here https://link.springer. com/journal/41307/volumes-and-issues/34-2

September issue of HEP (34/3) brough us a number of papers looking at university mergers in Finland, transformation of public institutions in Italy from the perspective of rectors and department chairs, quality assurance in Iran, and employment and wage gaps among Canadian male and female graduates. For the full table of contents and abstracts, please visit https://link.springer.com/journal/41307/volumes-and-issues/34-3

Higher Education engages with SDG 14: Life below water (forthcoming)

As a contribution to the *UN Decade of Ocean Science (2021-2030)*, the IAU and the University of Bergen (UiB) present a publication on *Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 – Life below water* to provide best practices and to exemplify how universities engage in Ocean Science and research, also to build back sustainably after COVID-19. 12 papers from IAU members and UiB-Ocean Sustainably Bergen partners highlight different ways in which higher education and research create opportunities to advance towards ocean sustainability and how this connects to others goals in the 2030 Agenda.

Higher Education engages with SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
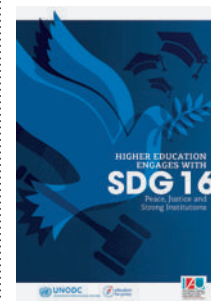
IAU and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), within the framework of its Education for Justice (E4J) initiative, launched a Call for research paper by young scholars The aim was to support young academics conducting research on topics related to SDG 16 and the rule of law, as well as to provide them with a platform to present their research. The publication consists of 12 peer-reviewed, high quality papers from diverse contexts and disciplines, all aiming at better understanding what advances but also what hampers sustainable development for all is of crucial importance for the future. https://iau-aiu.net/Download-the-joint-IAU-UNODC-publication-with-papers-from-young-scholars

IAU KNOWLEDGE HUB

IAU Membership News

Since April 2021, IAU is pleased to welcome 18 new members from 17 different countries into its global community. We are grateful to all our Members for their incredible support and engagement.

Sign up for the Newsletter and follow IAU on social media to receive updates from IAU on activities and to be informed of opportunities for engagement. Make sure to share news or updates that would be of interest around the world to be published in the News from Members section on the IAU website.

For questions about membership, contact at membership@iau-aiu.net

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NEW MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

BRAZIL
University of São Paulo
www.usp.br

CHINA
Yunnan University
http://english.ynu.edu.cn/

CHILE
Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile – UC
www.uc.cl/en

DENMARK
Roskilde University
https://ruc.dk/en

ETHIOPIA
Bahir Dar University
www.bdu.edu.et/

GERMANY
Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg
www.ph-heidelberg.de/en/home.html

IRELAND
University College Cork – UCC
www.ucc.ie/en

LIBERIA
Starz University
www.starzit.com

POLAND
Collegium Civitas
www.civitas.edu.pl/en

SOMALIA
Hormuud University
https://hu.edu.so/

SOMALIA
SIMAD University
https://simad.edu.so

THAILAND
Mahidol University
www.mahidol.ac.th

UKRAINE
Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Nontraditional Medicine
https://dnipromedicalinstitute.com/

Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design
https://en.knutd.edu.ua/

URUGUAY
Catholic University of Uruguay
www.ucu.edu.uy

USA
Kennesaw State University
www.kennesaw.edu

NEW MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

CANADA
Université du Québec
www.uquebec.ca

NEW MEMBER AFFILIATES

BELGIUM
Erasmus Student Network
https://esn.org/

IAU KNOWLEDGE HUB

IN FOCUS

Leadership for a Sustainable Future – Higher Education and Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals

By **Hilligje van't Land**, Secretary General, and **Isabel Toman**, Programme Officer, Sustainable Development, IAU

World leaders got together at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), in Glasgow, UK, in November. The world is looking for governments to take action for our planet, but is also expecting from business leaders, economists, international organisations' leaders, and civil society to take the necessary steps to ensure a proper future for all. 2021 and 2022 are critical years for climate action, and we have an opportunity to take a more holistic approach to and action for the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are less than ten years away from the deadline set for Agenda 2030 and much remains to be done.

At the International Association of Universities, we support and advocate for higher education's critical role for climate action and a sustainable transformation. The entire higher education community contributes to shaping the world. Of particular importance are research and educating the next generation of citizens and leaders. These should be educated and informed properly to address the challenges we face and equipped with the values and competences required to act in a sustainable and responsible way.

Sustainable development has been part of the strategic commitment of the IAU for some 30 years. When adopting the IAU Kyoto Declaration on Sustainable Development in 1993, IAU already called higher education leaders to *"enhance the capacity of the university to teach and undertake research and action in society in sustainable development principles, to increase environmental literacy, and to enhance the understanding of environmental ethics within the university and with the public at large"* and *"to cooperate with one another and with all segments of society in the pursuit of practical and policy measures to achieve [SD] and thereby safeguard the interests of future generations"*. IAU never stopped advocating for it over the years; we reaffirmed our commitment in particular in 2014 with the adoption of the IAU Iquitos Statement on Higher Education for Sustainable Development, and in 2015, we developed the IAU global cluster on higher education and research for sustainable development, bringing together some 100 universities from all five continents to engage with the UN Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. IAU also advocates for the strong role of HE to governments and international organisations, including the UN at the HLPF, UNESCO, and UNU.

In this issue we are pleased to give the floor to renowned university leaders and experts who reflect on *Leadership for a Sustainable Future – Higher Education and Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals*. Integrating sustainable development fully into higher education strategies is one of IAU's four strategic priorities. The papers selected demonstrate the crucial role of academic leadership in mainstreaming sustainable development, in strategy, teaching, research, partnerships, community and student engagement and show how this contributes to society.

We thank all authors for their great contributions and hope that their papers will inform and inspire readers worldwide, and initiate the additional transformative processes we need at universities and in society.

Bonne lecture!

IN FOCUS

AFRICA

01 Leadership and partnerships for a Sustainable Future: Experiences from Makerere University School of Public Health, in Uganda
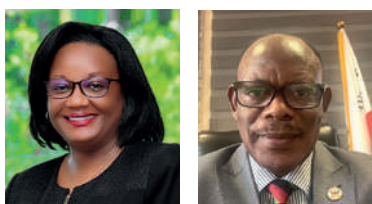
Rhoda Wanyenze, *Professor and Dean, School of Public Health, and* **Barnabas Nawangwe**, *Professor and Vice Chancellor Makerere University, Uganda.*

The University of Makerere is part of the IAU subcluster on SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), part of the UN Agenda 2030, have great potential to drive development and improve wellbeing of populations globally. Higher education institutions (HEIs) as major players in sustainable development. HEIs have progressed in the integration of SDGs, however, various impediments remain, including limited integration of SDGs into policies, limited empowerment of staff to integrate and deliver development related teaching, persistent silos across disciplines, and limited engagement of young people. Several HEIs have adopted a whole-institution approach, integrated SDGs in their strategic plans and formed networks to collaboratively address SDGs, with various regional networks to support universities in integration. However, there are still gaps in the functionality of the support networks, country policies and incentives for integration. The Times Higher Education impact rankings are one way to assess the contribution of universities to SDGs. These mechanisms may incentivize these shifts but there is a need for additional support, learning across universities, especially in the Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). A "whole-institution approach" and sustainable partnerships across universities, partnerships with industry and communities are crucial for appropriate research, innovations and training of transformative leaders for a sustainable future. This paper explores the progress and changes that universities need to make to fully embrace agenda 2030, with reference to the experiences at Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH).

> **HEIs have progressed in the integration of SDGs, however, various impediments remain, including limited integration of SDGs into policies, limited empowerment of staff to integrate and deliver development related teaching, persistent silos across disciplines, and limited engagement of young people.**

MakSPH integrated SDGs in the 2020-2030 strategic plan, including partnerships and hands-on problem-solving in teaching and learning to enhance creativity and leadership among scholars. Through the Karolinska Institutet-Makerere University partnership, a Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health (CESH) has been established to mobilise actions to drive the agenda for sustainable health within the broader SDG framework. The partnership currently includes Kinshasa University in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Benadir University in Somalia. Makerere University is also a member of the IAU HESD Cluster on SDG 3 with MakSPH as the focal point.

Co-creation of solutions through partnerships and engagement of relevant stakeholders including academia, industry, government is critical in research and innovations—the "Triple Helix". What is less emphasized is the role of communities and how they ensure relevance, acceptance, and learning from community experiences—the "Quadruple Helix". The model of training at MakSPH includes partnerships and field placements at public (ministry of health and district local governments) and non-governmental organizations, based on the "Public Health Schools without Walls" model, which has been sustained for >20 years. The School has worked with >50 organisations, with 10 dedicated district training sites, and recently piloted co-hosting of students alongside visiting scholars from partner universities in Africa, Europe and USA. The training integrates "community diagnosis" and service delivery, among other outputs from students. The School has adopted human centered approaches and engagement with policymakers, implementers and communities in the design and implementation of research. Some examples include studies to document the magnitude of injuries including road traffic accidents and drowning in partnership with the Uganda Police and the ministry of water and environment, studies among adolescent girls and young women in collaboration with the ministries of education and gender, labor and social welfare, and non-government organizations, family planning studies in collaboration with ministry of health, the national Population Council, Uganda Bureau of statistics, and UN agencies, among others, with a focus on knowledge translation.

In addition to partnerships within Uganda, the School maintains a wide network of partnerships with other universities and ministries of health in Africa to implement various capacity building and research projects. Examples of programs coordinated by MakSPH in Africa include: 1) Partnership to Enhance Technical Support for Analytical capacity and Data use

in Eastern and Southern Africa (PERSuADE)—13 universities partnering with ministries of health to enhance analysis and use of data in HIV, TB and Malaria funded by the Global Fund; 2) Resilient Africa Network, a partnership of 20 African universities in 16 countries which applies science and technology to strengthen the resilience of African communities against natural and man-made stresses with funding from USAID; 3) Assessment of the COVID-19 Response in Eastern, Central and Western Africa, including 5 universities with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Gates Ventures; 4) the Center for Tobacco Control in Africa (CTCA) funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation —the CTCA offers Technical and Institutional Support to governments in Africa, pools and avails evidence and resources; and supports cross sector collaboration for Tobacco Control at National and Regional Levels.

In conclusion, Makerere University has made significant important steps towards integrating SDGs and a wide network of partnerships across universities, policy, implementation and communities. However, significant bottlenecks remain in ensuring sustained financing and multidisciplinary linkages to fully achieve the "whole institution" approach. An overarching government policy framework is needed, with incentives and investments to drive the changes across HEIs within Uganda and across Africa. The changes within universities should also integrate modeling of sustainable development principles including embracing healthier, greener, fairer, and more inclusive environments within universities. Modeling a sustainable future within HEIs and multidisciplinary solutions including students will be critical in producing transformative leaders to drive sustainable change.

02 Academic Leadership in Training Change Agents towards achieving Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals. Experiences and Practices at the University Level

by **Thuita Thenya**, *Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya*

The University of Nairobi is the IAU HESD global cluster lead for SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

The innovative idea and creation of the International Association of Universities (IAU) by UNESCO, 70 years ago, continues to provide great relevance to institutions of higher learning as centres of societal transformation over several decades. The mission and vision of the IAU has not changed over time but has become more important as cooperation networks are functioning as catalysts for transformation. The role of IAU and more so of higher education in society continues to be of key importance in both developed and developing economies. By training experts in both natural and social sciences, Universities have continued to exert their relevance over time.

Networking and collaborating among institutions of higher learning provide the necessary platform for cross-pollicisation among institutions of higher learning, filling the gaps and enhancing their capacities for transfer of knowledge and promotion of sustainable development. It is true that since the 1950s, when IAU was founded, several changes have taken place across the nations and new challenges demand innovative solutions. However, the ambitious agenda for IAU, namely: "To provide a centre of co-operation at the international level among the universities and similar institutions of higher education of all countries, as well as among organisations in the field of higher education generally, and to be an advocate for their concerns", still remains very relevant.

Reflecting on the history allows to look back at challenges and opportunities and to build a better future. The IAU HESD cluster offers a renewed opportunity to work together more strongly on challenges of global and local relevance.

The University of Nairobi (UON) is celebrating 50 years since its establishment as the first national university in Kenya. However, the idea of an institution of higher learning goes back over 70 years to 1947, when the Kenyan government drew a plan for the establishment of a technical and commercial institute in Nairobi. This journey laid the foundation that have continued to train graduates as change agents that have helped in addressing society challenges over the years. Across the different disciplines and programmes at UON, relevant SDGs are part of the teaching courses exposing students to the 2030 agenda and thus help achieve all the 17 SDGs.

Use of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methods in teaching and research provide the much-required knowledge, and the connection across the SDGs. Such approaches provide the opportunities to break away from a siloes approach and ensure that "no-one is left behind". For example, *SDG 13 Climate Action* as well as *SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* affect health (SDG 3), biodiversity (SDG 15) and infrastructural development (SDG 11), to mention a few, meaning that various programmes should expose students to all interconnected SDGs.

Some of the initiatives towards this end at the University of Nairobi include programmes that have captured the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching and learning approach. Some of these are postgraduate programmes like

> 66 While COVID-19 momentarily put a halt to several academic programmes since March 2020, it also provided another opportunity, at reduced cost, where academic institutions of higher learning can provide leadership towards Agenda 2030 using technology to connect online the world universities under membership of the IAU. 99

those hosted by the Wangari Maathai Institute of Peace and Environmental Studies; Education for Sustainable Development in Africa (ESDA), which host the Masters of Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) Programme. Other academic lead initiatives include the Kenya Green University Network (KGUN), which supports the sharing of best practices to support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, academic institutions working with other partners like civil society could help foster the synergies needed to achieve Agenda 2030 by training current and future change agents that will act as champions of sustainable development. This was the case during the August 2021 summer school on climate justice, which involved the Pan Africa Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), the University of Nairobi (UON) and Kenya University in Nairobi. It attracted over 150 participants from across Africa.

While Covid-19 momentarily put a halt to several academic programmes since March 2020, it also provided another opportunity, at reduced cost, where academic institutions of higher learning can provide leadership towards Agenda 2030 using technology to connect online the world universities under membership of the IAU.

The IAU series of webinars on the future of higher education, initiated in spring 2020 and continued into 2021, engaged IAU members and partners in discussions on various themes touching on SD. UON is actively participating in IAU activities through the IAU HESD Cluster, which also brings forward its important leadership role in SD. In December 2020, during the UNODC – E4J dialogue series, which brought together universities, individuals, and other UN organizations, the University of Nairobi and its IAU HESD Cluster satellite University of Copenhagen demonstrated the important case for higher education's key role to achieving SDG16.

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

03 Leading Japan to Change for a Sustainable Future through Higher Education Initiatives

by **Muneo Kaigo**, *Professor, and* **Hidehiro Yamamoto**, *Associate Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Japan*

The University of Tsukuba is IAU HESD Global Cluster Lead for SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the University of Tsukuba has been facing challenges on how to deal with the impacts of the pandemic and how to ensure continuity of teaching, learning and research. As we write this article, Japan is facing its largest increase in COVID-19 patients since the beginning of the pandemic, the nation and university are now stepping into uncharted waters, and we must ensure that the integrity of institutions and society are maintained for the next several months.

The University of Tsukuba and IAU have continued to cooperate in multiple ways and developed more action to meet the targets set for *SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities*, and this mission has not been easy. From a global perspective, COVID-19 has exacerbated inequalities in particular for the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the population. Reducing inequality requires patience and perseverance, but finding new ways to stop the never-ending deepening and expansion of inequality is a serious and urgent matter.

To face these challenges, the Institute for Comparative Research in Human and Social Sciences (ICR) at the University of Tsukuba has continued its activities during these difficult times. The institute continued to devise online seminars (the SDGs seminar series) during this pandemic to cultivate ideas for reducing inequality and discover ways to stop the expanding dilemma of people being left behind in various contexts. Due to the

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> ❝ **As we face a period of endurance in an ongoing global pandemic, higher education has a key role to play in leading communities and society to better understand and accept changes leading to the achievement of the SDGs.** ❞

severity of the impact of COVID-19 during 2020-2021, ICR focused first on how COVID-19 has affected the implementation of the SDGs. The seminars covered various topics from a human and social scientific perspective. We discussed legal and constitutional issues, such as the impact of the pandemic on citizen rights. From a human sciences viewpoint, multicultural co-existence was discussed and pointed out the necessity to put more emphasis on this in education. Seminar topics also covered the conditions for developing a resilient society in an era of high mobility, as COVID-19 and complicated issues related to migration. ICR also participated in the Tsukuba Global Science Week 2020, transformed into and event with online poster sessions; it allowed to focus on reducing inequality among the minorities in Japan represented by the issues related to gender inequality, the disability community, migrants from overseas and non-Japanese communities living in Japan.

To promote better understanding of these findings and to raise awareness about the SDGs in the immediate surroundings of Tsukuba city, ICR represented the University of Tsukuba along with other active institutions in Tsukuba city at a month-long public poster event for SDGs in a large-scale commercial mall operated by Mitsui Corporation dedicated to raising community awareness of the SDGs in Tsukuba city. This successful event created an opportunity to reach out to the Japanese public that has not been fully aware of sustainability and global issues.

Throughout 2020-2021, COVID-19 has deprived everyone of the many opportunities of face-to-face contact in various contexts, however through virtual online seminars and posters that were both open to the public, ICR and the University of Tsukuba have successfully played a leading role in reaching out to the Japanese public, and raised awareness of the importance to address the SDGs and contributed to better understanding of the SDGs.

Now, the University of Tsukuba is mid-way in reforming and creating an effective network within the IAU HESD Global Cluster, for which Tsukuba leads on SDG 10. Within this partnership network, the University of Tsukuba will continue to put efforts on helping the satellites of the cluster to join in the activities that have been put in motion in Japan and internationally. Expansion of the network is needed and more participation from other institutions around the world will be welcomed. As we face a period of endurance in an ongoing global pandemic, higher education has a key role to play in leading communities and society to better understand and accept changes leading to the achievement of the SDGs.

The current deepening of inequalities happening on a global scale is devastating, as COVID-19 is ravaging nations with limited resources and health systems that are not as resilient as others. Humanitarian crises continue to happen throughout the world. Due to the overwhelming amount of information related to all issues big and small, we all live in an environment that an overwhelming amount of information o, a large variety of topics while only providing fragmented bits of information that is not always relevant for the survival of the human species. In such a precarious time, all higher institutions have an ever-so large role in promoting better understanding and acceptance of change for achieving the sustainable development goals and prevent prevalence and dissemination of negative information and pessimistic outlooks regarding the SDGs, and help imagine a better future.

04 Leadership for a Sustainable Future – Higher Education and Agenda 2030 and the SDGs at Assam Don Bosco University

by **Fr. Joseph Nellanatt**, *Pro Vice Chancellor*, **Juhi Baruah**, *Human Resources Director, Assam Don Bosco University, India*

Assam Don Bosco University is IAU HESD global Cluster Lead for SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

With the presentation of the Brundtland Commission Report, "Our Common Future" to the United Nations in 1987, the adoption of the "Future We Want" declaration on Sustainable Development and Green Economy at the 2012 UN Conference and the current countdown to deliver on the SDGs by 2030, we have come to realise that collective efforts and a shared vision for a common future for humanity are more significant than ever, especially now that, in what some call the "New Normal", the world is grappling with the effects of a pandemic. It is in this context that UNESCO calls for Education for Sustainable Development to be integrated into the teaching-learning processes of the university.

In fact, the very concept of Education for Sustainable Development or ESD is perceived and defined very differently as is the idea of sustainability in the myriad contexts and cultures around the world, with varying values and priorities, and

different development models. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are critically important to grow knowledge and skills basis that fuel innovation and thus contribute to economic growth and global competitiveness. Additionally, HEIs have a crucial role in strengthening communities in which they operate by way of social and cultural influence and stimulating development. HEIs influence the economic, social and cultural dimensions of society. It also has the potential to generate awareness among the students about the concerns of environmental degradation and its impact on the economic and of society at large.

Assam Don Bosco University's agenda in Education for Sustainable Development is manifested in the vision of the University which defines the University's values in terms of all its stakeholders: students, parents, faculty and staff members, alumni, community in which it is located, benefactors and governing body. The University adopts a "Whole Institution Approach" in its work towards developing and building capacity to address the complexity of sustainable development issues in an integrated and holistic manner. Furthermore, core values are cascaded into all functional aspects of the University under the stewardship of a collective leadership which encourages change in behaviour to create a sustainable environment focusing on equity. The shared, articulated vision can propel a positive change for improvement and build an inclusive and equitable work culture which is central to the functioning of the institution and achieving specific clearly articulated goals.

Social commitment, leading to Community Engagement, is integral to the University's vision. To be "*engaged*" in Assam Don Bosco University means fulfilling its inspirational and developmental role in the communities around it, nurturing synergy in reciprocal learning and action, based on student led initiatives in continuous dialogue among concerned stakeholders, aiming at the alleviation and resolution of issues afflicting communities and the environment. The impact of "*engaged*" initiatives delivered by the *Centre of Development Studies and Initiatives* at the University, with the voluntary enrolment of University fraternity in participatory consultation with relevant stakeholders and members of the rural community, have addressed livelihoods and food security; the promotion of education, community health, conservation of biodiversity, local self-governance systems, social security and community organization. The recognition of "Excellence in Social Responsibility" 2021 by the *Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry* (FICCI) and "Engaged University of the Year" 2020 by the *Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities* (ACEEU), the Netherlands, are a testament to this trajectory of the University in its commitment to impact outcome based educative processes, strategies and policies for youth for their positive transformation and contribution as builders of resilient communities, integral to the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development.

Central to the University's vision is *"Service learning"*, a programme for students to understand, integrate and apply

> ❝ Central to the University's vision is *"Service learning"*, a programme for students to understand, integrate and apply their knowledge from their subject areas to enhance the quality of life of their communities and the environment. ❞

their knowledge from their subject areas to enhance the quality of life of their communities and the environment. While the rationale of service learning flows from the University's vision of moulding socially committed individuals in the service of society, this programme is aligned with the shared vision and ownership of the communities facilitated through a participatory process. The Graduate Attributes of the University – being *"Intellectually Competent"*, *"Morally Upright"*, *"Socially Committed"*, *"Spiritually Inspired"* and *"Civically Responsible"* – are fostered in students during their entire University experience in order for the University graduates to be aware and sensitive and able to evaluate any particular action by asking themselves: "Does it contribute to justice and peace?"

"Leadership for a Sustainable Future" as expressed by Fr.(Dr.) Stephen Mavely, Vice Chancellor, Assam Don Bosco University, requires to continuously *"search for meaning"* and ask deeper questions of ourselves as educationists, and more fundamentally about what is driving us as we render our service to the youth – the leaders of tomorrow.

05 Creating impact and shaping a sustainable future

by **TAN Eng Chye**, *President, National University of Singapore*

Universities play an important role in advancing progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At their core, the SDGs constitute a roadmap to a sustainable future with its 17 goals representing pressing global challenges; these complex global goals require integrated solutions, coordinated actions, transparency, accountability and scaled policies and programs. Universities can leverage their research, teaching, innovation, operations, public service and partnerships to co-create solutions which can address such challenges. Actively involving the students in the process can also deliver a greater impact.

The past year has seen the world tackling pressing issues from **COVID-19 to climate change**, both of which embody the multidisciplinary complexity of the SDGs. The National University of Singapore (NUS)'s response to the COVID-19

> **NUS hopes to groom a new generation of researchers, entrepreneurs, policy makers and professionals who can go on to achieve the SDGs in the long term.**

pandemic was wide-ranging and swift. Drawing upon the breadth and depth of expertise among its researchers, scientists from the Duke-NUS Medical School were among the first in the world to successfully culture the coronavirus within days. A NUS research team developed an artificial intelligence (AI) platform to find an optimal combination of drugs against COVID-19. It was used to investigate 12 potential drug candidates, representing over 530,000 possible drug combinations. Within two weeks, this AI platform found a combination that was 6.5 times more effective than the then best-performing single drug. There are also teams working on rapid test kits and new vaccines for COVID-19.

A multidisciplinary team comprising NUS researchers and National University Hospital medical staff took less than two months to invent the *Droplet and Aerosol Reducing Tent* (DART), a portable structure that provides extra protection between healthcare workers and patients during procedures like intubation. This is testimony of collaborative efforts put forth to co-create vital solutions that save lives. Additionally, NUS supported Singapore's plans for community care facilities by opening up 28 blocks of its student residences to recovering COVID patients from May to July 2020. Considerable efforts were made by NUS students and staff to give the "guests" a warm reception and make them feel comfortable. Some of the projects included a welcome video in various languages, a blog in seven languages on information about the student residence these guests are living in, and a list of programmes, which were both entertaining and informative.

Turning to another complex challenge relating to *SDG 13 – Climate Action*, NUS adopts a different lens to demonstrate how university campuses can lead by example, adopting a life-cycle approach in operational excellence and using the grounds as a test bed for innovation. The university completed Singapore's first purpose-built net zero energy building SDE4 at its School of Design and Environment in 2019. A climate responsive building with net-zero energy consumption with more than 1200 solar photovoltaic panels on its rooftop, it is a cornerstone of NUS' aspirations for a sustainable campus. SDE4 is also a focal point for teaching sustainability concepts to the Design and Environment students, and a living laboratory to explore the impact of buildings on human health and well-being. Students and faculty learn both inside and outside the classroom, whilst being engaged in an integrated process of designing, developing, constructing, and operating this building. It hosts corporate laboratories including the *NUS-City Development Limited* (CDL) *Smart Green Home and Johnson Controls' Open Blue Innovation Centre* which contribute actively to the university's teaching and research mission.

The next phase is to retrofit existing buildings to super low energy ones as NUS embarks on its campus rejuvenation. The older SDE 1 and 3 buildings completed in the 1970s are now being re-adapted for current and future learning and discovery needs. These buildings are retrofitted with sustainability considerations in mind, such as reusing existing build frames, incorporating lightweight new additions to minimize embodied and operational carbon, incorporating advanced tropical design and energy performance. It is also an opportunity to involve the SDE faculty and researcher colleagues on various design and operational aspects including sustainability, energy management, building performance monitoring and providing an incubator platform to test-bed innovative concepts applicable to the urban equatorial climate.

Together with the other campus greening measures, this super low energy SDE precinct can be seen as a blueprint of climate stewardship for a sustainable future, and demonstrates to the students the viability and value of a lifestyle that is attuned to social and environmental priorities.

By walking the talk on campus, equipping the students with knowledge and critical thinking skills, and engaging our early-career researchers and students in co-designing innovative solutions, NUS hopes to groom a new generation of researchers, entrepreneurs, policy makers and professionals who can go on to achieve the SDGs in the long term.

06 Together We Are Building a More Sustainable Community

by **He Lianzhen**, *Vice President, Zhejiang University, China*

With less than 10 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an ambitious global effort from all sectors of society is now underway to create a healthier planet, ensure the well-being, equity and vitality of people, and support a thriving and sustainable economy – including education, healthcare, goods and services. Universities across the globe are actively considering how their strategy, planning and action would contribute to the development of the solutions. Students, staff, partners and the communities where we are based, all have a role in sustainability and Zhejiang University (ZJU) is removing all barriers in order to drive changes on the ground. This is done through a university-wide *Sustainability Action Plan: A Global ZJU for Social Good*, which integrates sustainability into learning, scholarship and campus operations.

ZJU upholds its mission to nurture future leaders and global citizens with social responsibilities, and has therefore

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embedded "Sustainability Competence" throughout its curricula and activities. A vivid example is our unique biodiversity course, which enables students to fully immerse themselves in nature while gaining the know-how of conserving wildlife. This August, at the invitation of the Organizing Committee of the *16th UN Climate Change Conference of Youth (COY16)*, our students took the initiative to launch the *Youth Statement on Climate Action*, calling on college students across China to act together on addressing environmental and social imperatives.

Urgent sustainability challenges require effective leadership for inter- and trans-disciplinary discovery. With the "Research@ ZJU" portal, we attempt to create a Virtual Research Environment to inspire innovative data sharing and interactions across disciplinary boundaries. ZJU also places a premium on green technology innovations. This March, the *International Research Center for Green Building and Low-Carbon City* was established on our International Campus. In collaboration with teams from Cambridge, Cornell and some other world-renowned universities, the Research Center not only boosts green transformation on campus, but also serves as a knowledge hub for local and global communities.

The power of education and research should be fully harnessed to foster "green awareness" on campus. And a green campus could, in turn, showcase the value of concrete action and lead to meaningful changes. ZJU's International Campus has implemented an encompassing program with a Green Office established to oversee green campus planning and construction, operational activities monitoring and community outreach. With a proactive approach to building a green, low-carbon environment, the International Campus is the first college campus in China to have joined the Eco-Campus certification system and won a platinum award for its leading sustainable operations and management capacity. Below are some of the steps ZJU has taken to minimize our collective impact on the earth.

The Campus enjoys a superior natural environment in the city of Haining. It is surrounded to the north and south by wetland parks and connected with the city through a water system. In consideration of such a distinctive environment, the "Sponge Campus" concept was incorporated into landscape design. For instance, the campus rainwater is collected for storage in the central lake, to be filtered and used for campus irrigation. It is estimated that 15% of water resources are conserved and utilized every year. To meet its emission reduction targets, the Campus promotes eco-friendly travel options. Ten public bicycle rental points allow easy access across the Campus, which are further connected to hundreds of city-wide rental points.

Alternatively, people can easily walk to every corner of the Campus through a full-fledged pedestrian system.

Another innovative practice lies in the development of a "Smart Campus" platform to monitor carbon footprint, which enables us to optimize the "Low Carbon Campus" system. Empowered by information technology, we are able to measure carbon emission intensity from a variety of indicators, which will support the delivery of annual accounting reports on carbon emissions. According to the latest data, direct greenhouse gas emissions on the Campus have continued to decrease for three consecutive years. And the overall growth rate has dropped significantly compared with 2019.

A university campus is a microcosm of the world – this was mentioned in the Joint Statement on the 2030 Agenda, a document announced at the Global University Presidents' Forum organized by ZJU with the support from IAU this March. Currently, 61 peer universities from 31 countries and regions have signed onto the Statement (contact to join: TONG Jun: tj@zju.edu.cn). By drawing on the experience of world-class campuses and unleashing multidisciplinary synergy, ZJU strives to position itself as a local and global leader of low-carbon action and transform its campuses into resource-conserving and environmentally friendly living laboratories. Along this dynamic, interactive and inclusive journey to a sustainable future, we look forward to joining hands with global stakeholders to realize our shared vision through education, research, innovation and partnership.

07 Kyoto University: Staying ahead of the curve, and advancing innovative education and research that meets the needs of the changing times

by **Norihiro Tokitoh**, *Executive Vice-President for Research, Evaluation, and Industry-Government-Academia Collaboration, Kyoto University, Japan*

Kyoto University is a research university that will celebrate its 125th anniversary in 2022. Long before the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations, Kyoto University consistently sought to anticipate and address the multitude of issues facing humanity and contemporary society, and promote innovative education and research. For example, in an effort to address climate change and environmental destruction through the achievement of carbon neutrality, the university established its *Graduate School of Energy Science* and *Institute of Advanced Energy* prior to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Researchers

> **Through their pioneering research activities, the facilities have cultivated a large number of talented human resources with specialized knowledge and an international perspective.**

at those institutions have endeavoured to develop energy science studies as an interdisciplinary field, with the aim of realizing an energy-sustainable society. In 2002, the university established its *Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies* and a facility called *Sansai Gakurin* (the Grove of Universal Learning). Those facilities sought to develop an academic discipline that pursues a new philosophy of civilization, and develop scientific and technological knowledge with the ultimate aim of contributing to the realization of a sustainable global environment and a human society that can support it. Through their pioneering research activities, the facilities have cultivated a large number of talented human resources with specialized knowledge and an international perspective. Also in 2002, with funding from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)'s 21st Century Centre of Excellence (COE) and Global COE Programs, the university established the largest number of education and research Center of Excellence programs in Japan (36 in total). One of those was the *Energy Science in the Age of Global Warming program*, which pursued pioneering research to promote the achievement of zero carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions. In the process of its efforts, the *Joint Usage/Research Centre for Zero Emission Energy Research* was selected for the MEXT Joint Usage/Research Centre program in 2011. To develop a scenario for the transition towards a zero CO_2 emission society, experts from industry and energy-related think tanks were invited to organize the Energy Scenario and Strategy Study Group. The group engages in intensive discussions on the effectiveness and feasibility of various technology roadmaps and energy scenarios. The *Zero Emission Energy Research Centre* advances technological innovation to aid the realization of carbon neutrality. It also fosters human capital with advanced skills and expertise, and promotes international collaboration.

In January 2008, Kyoto University formulated an Environmental Tax System to save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions on its campuses. The funds generated through the environmental tax system can be invested in initiatives that provide incentives for energy-saving efforts and other measures. The aim is to reduce the university's total greenhouse gas emissions by at least 2% every year.

As the environmental concerns pre-empted by Kyoto University come to be more widely recognized, the Japanese government has recently declared that Japan will aim to become carbon neutral by 2050. To work towards the government's goal, Kyoto University has been requested by MEXT, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE), and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) to join the University Coalition for

Carbon Neutrality 2050. Through this coalition, universities are anticipated to collaborate with national and local governments, industrial sectors, and other universities in Japan and overseas to advance research and development on national and regional de-carbonization, and promote its application for the benefit of society. Coalition member institutions are also expected to develop the capacity for zero-carbon emission on their campuses and in their localities, and increase their dissemination of relevant information. To respond to such requests from the government, Kyoto University established an internal administrative organization under the Executive Vice-President for Research, Evaluation, and Industry-Government-Academia Collaboration in April 2021. Furthermore, in May 2021, the Kyoto University Carbon Neutral Promotion Forum was launched as a platform for the exchange of information relating to the achievement of carbon neutrality at the university. Through such efforts, the university seeks to apply the fruits of its many years of innovative education and research endeavours to meet the needs of the current era and contribute to the development of future society.

08 Nust an SDG-Engaged University

by **Barira Hanif**, *Office of Sustainability, National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Pakistan*

NUST embarked upon the process of SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) alignment in 2018, and made an organizational commitment to map and align all core functions with the Agenda 2030 including Academics and Youth Engagement, Operations and Governance, Research and Innovation and Stakeholders Management. All internal stakeholders, alongside top-line management, were sensitized through multiple quarterly joint collaborative and interactive sessions throughout the last few years. The stakeholders were assigned ownerships of their respective SDGs, and associated KPIs, as per their core functions. A dedicated SDGs portal was developed in-house to collect yearly data on these Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from all stakeholders. The plan also considers re-alignment and re-structuring once every reporting cycle is over. More than 20 offices and schools of NUST were assigned 250+ KPIs to work towards a unified goal of SDGs alignment, and also established cross-sectorial partnerships and international memberships for the cause. We also improved our THE Impact Ranking in all SDGs, with overall ranking improved from rang 300+ globally in 2019 to between 200-300 in 2021.

Higher education can be vital in serving as a strategic tool for attaining the SDGs. Leadership in higher education institutes should institutionalize sustainable development and mould their

curriculum and interests to serve towards the social, economic, and technological growth of their society. This can be achieved by opening the gates of knowledge and paving the way for innovation that can prove vital for sustainable development. Universities must increase research and skill-building techniques in sustainable development to more adequately equip the future generation with the necessary tools to play their role in sustainable development of their country

Pakistan being an initial signatory of the UN SDGs, is obliged to meet the SDGs by 2030 and report annually on its progress to the United Nations. Pakistan was the first Parliament to establish Secretariat in Parliament House for SDGs, and a dedicated SDGs Section in Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives (MoPDSI), to monitor/coordinate on SDGs nationally. NUST Started its SDGs Alignment Initiative in June 2018 and coined the term as becoming "SDGs-Engaged University".

This includes the 7 steps: Map, Align, Measure, Assign, Monitor and Evaluate, Re-align and Re-structure, Collaborate. This transformation process is made possible through the engagement of all stakeholders, and profiling of university activities across the different domains of university core functions (Operations and Governance, Research and Innovation, Academics and Youth Engagement, Stakeholders Management). Furthermore, NUST introduced new SDGs-aligned policies, interventions in Operations and Governance domains, conducted extensive mapping of Research and Innovation portfolio, and Academic programs, students-run voluntary schemes under Academics and Youth Engagement, with SDGs, whereas established cross-sectoral partnerships for achieving the SDGs. The complete journey of NUST SDGs Alignment plan can be found on the NUST website (1).

This strategy for leadership has been successful so far. Next to engaging many schools and parts at NUST and adopting KPIs, NUST developed and deployed SDGs Portal to track progress and report on these KPIs. NUST established an Office of Sustainability, a first-of-its kind in any university in Pakistan, as per international practices to pledge the organization's commitment and vision towards sustainability. Current actions and middle-long term goals include:

- Devise a Sustainability Strategy for NUST
- Transform NUST into a Living Lab for testing and co-creating sustainable solutions
- Establish effective national and international partnerships regional and int'l collaborations for sustainable development
- Participate and organize conferences on sustainable development
- Provide expertise, assist Govt. and public sector and other organizations in devising SDGs aligned policies/ strategies
- Improve NUST standing in global rankings of THE Impact and UI Green Metric
- Devise a cross-sectoral Climate Action plan, while engaging youth.

❝ **The main challenges implementing the SDGs on campus were to sensitise and open the minds of people towards new and sustainable practices.** ❞

The main challenges implementing the SDGs on campus were to sensitise and open the minds of people towards new and sustainable practices.

NUST Office of Sustainability pledges to devise new sustainable initiatives to create an impact on the lives of local communities through continuing education, community service, research and innovation, and outreach.

09 Beyond 2030: Youth, Imagination, and Educating Leaders for what comes after the SDGs
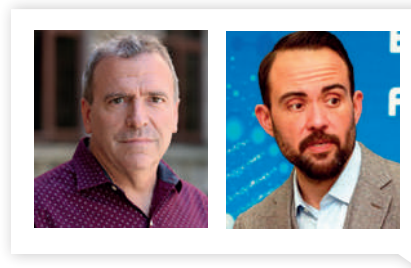
by **Peter G. Malvicini**, *PhD and* **John A. Sweeney**, *PhD, Center for Policy Research & Outreach, Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

The key to supporting the SDGs, both as a broad movement and *beyond 2030,* is to foster the co-creation of powerful images of alternative futures. To achieve this lofty goal, the capability to "use the future," which is a process and practice for understanding our anticipatory assumptions, must move to the centre of how we educate youth. Universities are charged with nurturing creativity and inspiring hope, but we are facing a collective crisis: a "poverty of imagination" brought about by a range of crises (Miller 2018). How can and might universities embrace futures literacy? Is higher education prepared to move beyond 2030?

Universities, such as Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT) not only provide skills, but also spaces for students to explore, challenge, and debate values. Journeying through the hallowed halls of higher education remains a privilege that many around the world cannot access, so those who have this opportunity are, even if unknown to them, leaders. Governments are increasingly seeing links between education and cultivating the next generation of leadership. Uzbekistan is no exception.

> 66 **We need a sweeping shift in mind-set if the SDGs are to be reached in the next decade. This will depend on the imagination of young people who are brave enough to co-create images of alternative futures.** 99

The government of Uzbekistan has a massive youth bulge (60% of the population is under the age of 30), but the effects of the 70-year Soviet legacy are still felt in many ways. We need a sweeping shift in mind-set if the SDGs are to be reached in the next decade. This will depend on the imagination of young people who are brave enough to co-create images of alternative futures. Futures that not only change conversations, but also seed transformative change.

Indicators, and measures are useful. But SDGs imply a pursuit of well-being that must be continued for decades. Futures Literacy is a tool toward realizing a better life for people. In Uzbekistan, WIUT is beginning to use futures tools. Championed by UNESCO, like reading, writing, and speaking, futures is a language we learn. At WIUT we are working to:

■ *Support capability-building engagements* for both faculty and students centred on "using the future" to nurture and support futures literacy across disciplines and professions.

■ *Encourage an "Uzbekistan Futures" movement* by gathering people from academe, International development, and government to co-create images of alternative futures, specifically those showing transformations leading to the further flourishing of Uzbek society.

The Rand Corporation think tank began futures work in the 50's, when they applied a futures approach to national defence. From there, futures approaches spread, influencing every aspect of societies. Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic teach us to focus beyond today's problems, anticipate different crises and prepare for them. Futures work helps universities anticipate unpredictable futures.

We are pursuing a UNESCO Chair in Futures Studies and Futures Literacy. This Chair will link us to Chairs in a dozen countries across Europe, Asia, South America, and Africa and more than twenty Chair applicants, like WIUT. A Chair would advance our wish to become a national and Central Asia futures hub. Linking people and organizations together as they share and learn from each other. Futures work is always "work in progress" for educational institutions. When I imagine University futures, I see collaborative spaces with outcomes emphasizing a shared process toward the "good life" replacing competition for grades, rankings, and publications.

At WIUT we have emerging practices and hopes for a Futures Chair. Disparate activities link to the common purpose—using

the future to actively create a better life for people, families, and society:

■ *Steering research to include futures approaches and tools* taking what we know about the past and present as a basis for futures work and identifying alternative futures.

■ *Futures Literacy Labs* start with a specific challenge. Labs provide a framework to surface current assumptions about the future. This interrupts taken-for-granted routine uses of the future. Participants in FL Labs learn new ways to imagine the future.

■ *Capabilities building*. Faculty members and senior leadership experience and learn anticipation in research in their disciplines through future events and workshops. The limiting focus on recommendations for today, transforms to anticipation of different futures, deciding on ones they want to create for the future and pathways to create new futures.

■ *Engage visiting professors,* with futures experience, in core subjects like economics and finance, business and marketing, international law, computing and global education. This will spread the process of futures literacy across disciplines to current and new faculty and students.

Futures work requires links to WIUT's like-minded partners across UN agencies, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, international development agencies, government, and other universities.

What lies beyond 2030? That's anyone's guess. While we cannot anticipate the future with certainty, we can contribute to shaping the future we want We can (and must) "imagine the future" to understand not only where we are now but, more importantly, where we want to go... together.

🔟 Proposed SDG 18: Spiritually and Leadership

by **Dzulkifli Abdul Razak,** *Rector, International Islamic University Malaysia*

The International Islamic University Malaysia is part of the IAU subcluster on SDG 4: Quality Education

The coronavirus pandemic has been likened to a full dressed rehearsal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), part of

the UN Agenda 2030. Namely in exposing the various overdue societal vulnerabilities in the world ever since the beginning of the pandemic. There is a need to "flatten the curve" in order to narrow the existing divides so that the *4A elements of accessibility, availability, affordability as well as appropriateness* are optimally dealt with, as well as ensuring that fairness and justice are best met. Likewise, the 4As are equally applicable to flatten the health curve in order to gradually resolve the pandemic.

However, it also requires a "spiritual and ethical" glue to keep the much-needed social bonding (not distancing) across humanity in defence against the deadly virus. Without it, the pandemic will break (and has broken) through the human ranks resulting in more casualties as seen in several cases where social solidarity is undermined by individual preferences.

In the same manner, SDGs need a similar glue to connect the dots of the 17 goals. To this end, "spirituality" is found to be needed as a cross-cutting value-based ethical platform in humanising the overarching outcome of people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnerships (5Ps) addressed in the SDGs. Examples of the 17 goals that could be associated to this aspect in attempting a *Whole-Institution* or *Community Transformation Approach* are: SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions, especially 16.A); SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals, especially 17.5 and 17.15); SDG 1 (no poverty) which emphasises the aspects of poverty defined by economic parameters, whereas "poverty" framed by the perspectives of moral-ethical values is as important to ensure that the goal of "no poverty" is truly met and sustained; and SDG 4 (quality and inclusive education) as framed by the UNESCO pillars of learning, notably, 'learning to be' in arriving at the purposed outcome of a "complete (holistic) person".

Meaning to say, spirituality is imperative for a more wholistic engagement with SDG 4 – physically, mentally and socio-emotionally. What is more, since the beginning of 2020, the coronavirus spread globally has resulted in many schools around the world to be closed temporarily. More than 91 per cent of students were reportedly impacted, such that by April 2020, nearly 1.6 billion children and youth were out of school. At the same time, mental and emotional health is reportedly on the rise in unprecedented ways. Meanwhile, some 369 million who relied on school meals had the daily nutrition sources disrupted with implications on SDG 2 (zero hunger) – adding some 130 million people already at risk of suffering acute hunger by the end of 2020, and counting. The most vulnerable and marginalised groups are hit hardest by inequalities, especially girls, in terms of access and enrolment rates at all levels. What has been achieved in advancing education worldwide is now reversed. Already during the pre-pandemic days, in 2018, about 260 million children were out of school, almost 20 per cent of the global population in that age category. It called to question the UN tagline: 'Leave no one behind'?

> " Spirituality is imperative for a more wholistic engagement with SDG 4 – physically, mentally and socio-emotionally. "

Of late, aspects of mental health have become a global concern, with spirituality being a primary consideration. The SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing) which is directly impacted by mental health and psychosocial issues, will benefit most from the input to complement the health and wellbeing outcome holistically as defined by the World Health Organisation. As it stands, the goal includes a "commitment to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases by 2030 – presumably the coronavirus pandemic too (on hindsight). In addition, it also " aims to achieve universal health coverage, and provide access to safe and effective medicines and vaccines for all." Current reports on the subject of "vaccine nationalism" and even "apartheid" as practised by some countries will jeopardise SDG 3 (hence, the entire Agenda 2030) if the discriminative trends are not resolved. The failure of SDG 3, underpinned by 13 targets that cover a wider spectrum, is bound to affect other SDGs that are health-dependent as a result of the existing coronavirus pandemic where the health issue is central.

While major progress was charted in improving the lives of millions of people, pre-pandemic, this is now being questioned when health emergencies pose unprecedented global challenges and unpreparedness – materially and spiritually. Hence, a "new" genre of leadership is needed to ensure that the SDGs continue to be relevant and effective in response to the threat of coronavirus and its variants. It is of vital importance to adopt a leadership approach that goes beyond the global health crisis into a whole-of-society leadership approach at global, national and at subnational levels. I suggest to use the term WISER as an acronym that could describe a new transformative model of leadership style. The letters stand for Wholeness, Inclusive, Sustainable (including Spiritually), Equitable and Resilience. To support this, a new goal, *SDG 18: Spirituality and Leadership* is proposed as a "glue" to connect all the dots of SDGs.

IN FOCUS

EUROPE

11 Leadership devoted to sustainability a key to success in HEI's contribution to sustainable development

by **Pam Fredman**, IAU President and Former Rector Gothenburg University, Sweden

The University of Gothenburg is IAU HESD Cluster Lead for SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Knowledge creation, development and transfer through research and education provided by universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) is the key to the development of a sustainable future for society. An explicit commitment to provide knowledge and competence for a sustainable future, including, economic, ecological, social and cultural perspectives was in many HEIs initiated several decades ago. This is also reflected in IAU statements and activities since the early 90ths (1). However, the Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs, envisaged as common global goals, became a catalyst for the HE teaching and research, it fostered actions and stressed the collective responsibility for the SDGs while calling for strong cooperation between the higher education sector and society.

In this article, I want to share my experience as academic leader at University of Gothenburg and my views on the importance of a leadership devoted to sustainability, leadership at all levels.

In 2006, the University of Gothenburg was the first university worldwide to have adopted and implemented an environmental management system certified by both ISO 14001 (2) and EMAS (3). The process to reach the certificates was initiated by the vice-chancellor and implemented through engagement of the leadership at the faculty and department level. The first and necessary step was to get the faculties, students and administrative staff to acknowledge the value and importance of participating in implementing an environmental management system throughout the operation. The annual follow-up, as part of the certification, and proof of progress – not least reduced energy costs -, was part of the increased interest and responsibility for environmental sustainability among those who were not already devoted.

> **"** For HE to fulfil its key role in society and to contribute to sawing the seeds for a sustainable future, local, national, regional and certainly also global cooperation within the sector and beyond is needed. **"**

The establishment of a systematic environmental management system became an important foundation for the entire University to broaden sustainability efforts to cover all the sustainable pillars, economy, environment and social. I would also highlight that the implementation needs patience from the leadership to avoid strong opposition and to reach a whole institutional engagement. The ongoing engagement in sustainability in HE and with the SDGs as a platform most likely has increased development speed.

Another important success factor for the University of Gothenburg to implement sustainability and the SDGs in all its activities was that many researchers for a long time already were operating with a sustainability focus in mind, initially with broad perspectives on environmental issues. Cooperation and interdisciplinarity has been a matter of course and a driving force for development. A research network between and within Chalmers and the University of Gothenburg with support from the university leadership was established in 2000 and developed into the *Gothenburg Centre for Sustainable Development* (4). The core task was to create and facilitate cooperation, within and beyond the HE sector to develop solutions to global challenges. The Centre often worked with the IAU and still does.

Interdisciplinarity is crucial in reaching the SDGs. The academic leadership must promote and support interdisciplinarity within its institution and advocate its relevance and necessity to external partners and stakeholders. HE leadership needs to take action to change today's funding and merit systems that inhibits cooperation and interdisciplinarity but also show initiative.

As an example, in 2015, the University of Gothenburg invested financially in new research centres under the theme "global societal challenges" (5). The intention of the initiative was to inspire and financially support researchers from various disciplines to cooperate, with high quality research, to create new knowledge aiming at contribute to solving a global challenge of their choice. The seed funding from the university has over the years multiplied with external financing. The trust and financial support from the leadership is important internally and to external stakeholders and funders.

The leadership must also recognize the strong engagement from students and involve them in decision-making and strategic group-taking. They are strongly engaged in the Agenda 2030 and SDGs and the HEIs responsibility to empower people inside and outside of the university to take action for a sustainable

future. At the University of Gothenburg, students have for decades been very active pushing for a green campus and for sustainability to be integrated in all education programs and courses. They are the future leaders and changing agents in society at large.

With this article, I wanted to share my experiences from the University of Gothenburg to illustrate the responsibility and opportunities for the academic leadership to, together with its employees and students, contribute to sustainable societal development, to achieve the 17 sustainability goals and realize Agenda 2030.

I was pleased to share my expertise and passion with the IAU when joining the Board and in 2016 when I was elected to the position of President of the IAU. Sharing experience and encourage peer to peer learning is one of the main objectives of International Association of Universities' work, in particular in HESD and 2018 IAU the Global Cluster of Higher Education Institutions was launched (6).

For HE to fulfil its key role in society and to contribute to sawing the seeds for a sustainable future, local, national, regional and certainly also global cooperation within the sector and beyond is needed. Cooperation and mutual trust and respect for societal, cultural, economic and ecological diversity and adoption of fundamental values of HE needs to be nurtured on a daily basis. Interinstitutional and multistakeholder cooperation is the key.

12 Universities must lead the way in addressing the SDGs

by **Michael Spence**, *President and Provost, University College London, UK*

2021 feels like a watershed moment for the world in our efforts to create a more sustainable and equitable future for everyone. Both the coronavirus pandemic and Climate Emergency are truly global challenges, with both disproportionately affecting the poorest and most marginalised people in society.

Our sector is well-placed to provide leadership in the world's efforts to address these challenges. This was demonstrated throughout the coronavirus pandemic, during which universities such as UCL provided advice to governments and spearheaded the development of life-saving treatments and vaccines.

It is incumbent upon us to do the same to address the numerous challenges framed within the UN's Sustainable

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Development Goals (SDGs), from minimising climate change and decreases in biodiversity, to reducing social inequalities and ensuring a good education for all the world's children.

Addressing the challenges facing society was at the heart of UCL's founding mission in 1826, and we continue to bring together the brightest minds across different disciplines to tackle the pressing issues of the 21st century.

When I joined UCL in January 2021, I was pleased to find thousands of our staff and students addressing the SDGs through their research, teaching and extra-curricular activities. We established the UCL SDGs Initiative (SDGI) (1) to stimulate and facilitate many more, and to help ensure our collective efforts is greater than the sum of our parts.

Over the past five years, UCL published around 30,000 SDGs-related research papers, many of them with partners around the world. They addressed diverse topics, from improving sanitation in urban Africa to generating electricity from food waste in a London community garden next door to our central London campus.

However, we wanted to ensure the UCL SDGI maximises not just the impact of our research on the SDGs. It also encompasses our teaching, external engagement, student activity and operations, as well as new opportunities for collaboration, including between these different spheres of our activity.

To help to ensure this, we established a university-wide SDGI Board to provide strategic direction, while also encouraging a 'bottom-up' approach from across our faculties and student union to generate grassroots input.

We are looking at ways to incorporate sustainability into teaching across our faculties to educate the next generation of policymakers, academic researchers, entrepreneurs or social campaigners. After all, it is they, not us, who will go on to address the challenges facing the world long after 2030. Students studying English at UCL are already examining how literature is representing global climate changes, while those studying physics are learning about how humans can deal with climate change, as well as the science of global warming. Our aim is for all our students to have the opportunity to study and be involved in sustainability.

Our students are some of our most vocal proponents of achieving the SDGs. To harness this spirit, we are empowering them to get involved in extra-curricular activities that are supporting the SDGs. Notable examples include redistributing surplus meals to tackle food poverty in London and organising workshops to help London schoolchildren better understand the climate emergency.

Beyond our education and research, we are also thinking hard how our own operations could better further the SDGs. We've set challenging targets for the way we operate as a university: by 2024 our aim is for our campus to be free of single-use plastic, for our buildings to be net zero carbon emissions, and to have created 10,000 square metres of more biodiverse space on campus.

Working in partnership

However, we are acutely aware that we cannot address global problems and deliver true impact on our own.

We can only achieve this, firstly by listening to others who may know more than us, and, more broadly, by providing opportunities for more and deeper local and global partnerships – with other universities, governments, policymakers, industries and local communities.

The challenges are complex, interconnected and will require working in partnership to develop multi-organisation and cross-disciplinary solutions.

With their history of discovery through collaboration and the increasing awareness of the need to engage externally to ensure these discoveries have real-world impact, universities are uniquely placed to spearhead these partnerships: within our own institutions, with each other, and with governments, local communities and industry.

For example, teams at UCL are using 'citizen scientists' in the UK to gauge the public's appetite for composting biodegradable plastics, and are working with clinicians, manufacturers and wheelchair users in Kenya to develop bespoke wheelchairs using 3D printing.

Beyond UCL, we are also continuing to play a leading role in global bodies, including the UN and U7+ Alliance. Whether they are research collaborations or sharing our expertise with global bodies, it is through such partnerships that we can achieve the SDGs.

The SDGs truly offer us a common language and framework that can unite academia, students, government and industry to deliver lasting change for people and planet. Let's keep working together to achieve this.

13 Understanding green leadership

by **Roland Zarzycki**, *Vice-Rector for Academic Research, Collegium Civitas, Poland*

Concern and innocence

Research on environmental attitudes have recently become particularly fashionable in Poland. This cumbersome topic effectively attracts the attention of the government, companies and NGOs. More and more studies are issued, even though the conclusions offered are pretty much the same. At the forefront is the growing concern about the condition of the environment among the Poles. Interviewees also indicate that we all need to act, here and now. Moreover, as the reports show, although our knowledge of ecology is quite limited, it still seems to be sufficient to take significant pro-ecological action.

So what do we do in Poland for the climate? We sort garbage (79%), save water (66%) and electricity (65%), use reusable packaging (65%), and avoid accumulating excessive amounts of things (45%) (Blue Media, 2020). It is quite apparent that these actions, especially being so blurred, will not save the planet. Simultaneously, the interviewees are unwilling to vow any further commitments, backing their attitudes with statements such as "I would like to do more, but I don't know what" (35%) or "I do as much as I think is right" (35%) (UNGC Poland, 2020). And one can, clearly, defend them with the well-known coaching fable that the strength of the small steps cannot be overestimated. At this stage, however, what small steps can provide us with at best, is to watch Earth dying but with an itching sense of innocence.

Greenwash me, please

The source of the moral and emotional challenges we have to cope with is that despite our heroic acts of water-saving, environmental parameters deteriorate. This is more and more often confirmed not only by activists' tales, but also by everyday life, making it much more difficult to ignore. Unfortunately, just as we, ordinary citizens, have learnt to pretend that we do care, also our politicians have already learned how to avoid responsibility for the environmental collapse by feeding us with moving stories about the importance of green transition. The business sector being no different, serving us with bloated CSR shows, marvellous no-printing days included.

At the end of the day the sad truth is that we are those who desire to get greenwashed, because it is nobody else but we,

who vote, buy and thus decide. And do we really hold politicians accountable for the effects and not promises? How many of the gas station clients remember the environmental atrocities of the past (Greenpeace, 2010)? How many customers check for abusive exploitation behind fair trade labels (Henderson, 2008; Spendel, 2010; Subramanian, 2019)? For these very reasons, it is the consumers themselves who have the greatest interest in being greenwashed.

All the rest is then done by the invisible hands of the free market (Berrone, *et al.* 2017; Szabo, Webster, 2020). Those who violate the rules of political correctness have long been out of the game. And although the EU has taken steps to clean up green communication, whistle blowers have already indicated that it will only take greenwashing to a new level, now validated thanks to lobbying behind the EU procedures (Kohan, 2021).

Beyond guilt and innocence

How do one break the inexorable logic of greenwashing? By going beyond fantasies about our innocence and dedication. By stopping to race for the most mawkish slash thrilling green manifestos. By putting an end to the global trade in SDG labels. Hence, through action- rather than guilt- or self-oriented, strong leaders.

Somehow, this creates a great opportunity for the HEIs to contribute to a genuine green change for it is within the walls of the universities where the attitudes of youth are being forged. At least as long as these institutions manage to reach beyond the clichés and provide environments conducive to the development of critical thinking, self-reflection and empathy. Actually, by employing the model of the competences required for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue as described by the Council of Europe, we already quite accurately sketch the constellation of competences needed to become a fully-fledged 3.0 green leader. As always, however, the devil is in the details. Leadership simply cannot be boiled down to the transfer of knowledge and any education process aimed at forging future changemakers needs to be firmly anchored in the university's ethos. Any effective didactic action needs to be developed at the level of programmes, through specific curricula and by guidance of academic leaders, who themselves truly believe in both the value of critical thinking and passionate commitment.

14 Rethinking healthcare workforce education
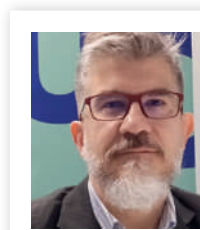
by **Marta Aymerich**, *Health Sciences professor and Vice President for Strategic Planning and Research, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya,* **Maria Niemi**, *Associate professor at Karolinska Institute,* **Virginia Schmied**, *School of Nursing and Midwifery professor at Western Sydney University,* **David Serwadda**, *Professor at Makerere University,* **Titi Savitri Prihatiningsih**, *Faculty of Medicine, Public Health and Nursing at Universitas* **Gadjah Mada**, *and* **Albert Barbera**, *Director of the eHealth Center, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya on behalf the IAU SDG3 Cluster (Photo here: lead author/coordinardor Albert Barbera)*

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is IAU HESD global cluster lead for SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the SDGs and their interconnections in empowering societies to meet global challenges and accomplishing Agenda 2030. The purpose of medical education is to train medical and healthcare workers who provide the care we need. When technological breakthroughs cause shifts in healthcare, medical education needs to adjust accordingly. Moreover, the current situation has clearly placed healthcare workers in the centre of the storm. Therefore, medical education is crucial in empowering healthcare workers to face current and future challenges.

The IAU SDG3 Cluster, one of the subclusters of the IAU Global HESD Cluster, identified the following lessons for medical education that were learned from this pandemic:

• Health and disease in an interconnected world

We need to make all students are aware that epidemics are no longer only local or regional, but global. The interconnected world means we share diseases, that local strategies are no longer the only solution. Therefore, our students need to understand that the challenges we will face need systemic and global solutions; and to tackle them, healthcare professionals need to understand the complexity of global and political relations.

❝ Students need to understand that the challenges we will face need systemic and global solutions; and to tackle them, healthcare professionals need to understand the complexity of global and political relations. **❞**

In addition, the role of international institutions is crucial in the current interconnected world, and healthcare professionals should learn to link health strategies with policies and implementation designs, to exchange, and to understand these complexities beyond the national or local context.

• A need for interdisciplinary and interprofessional education

Interdisciplinary medical education concerns the links between medicine, public health and planetary health. Climate change affects every aspect of our lives, from the air we breathe and the food we eat to the increased risk of pandemics and natural disasters, and the social disruption that these crises cause. After the COVID-19 crisis, we should adopt a planetary health approach, since protecting the environment is an essential strategy for avoiding other major health crises. This should be intensively taught, from medical schools to continuing medical education.

Therefore, interprofessional medical education including public health and environmental sciences is a must. Interprofessional education with nursing and other health sciences is also needed. Teamwork is essential for healthcare delivery and the sooner medical students interact with other healthcare professions, the better.

In addition to that, we will witness a service transformation, from hospital based to population-based care. This implies a community-based approach in the medical education curriculum without forgetting patient-centred health or citizen-centred health. We are transitioning from seeing a patient as passive complier to a co-producer of wellbeing.

• Learning soft skills to overcome uncertainty

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many health workers – especially those working in the front line – have been confronted by the necessity to make difficult medical decisions and priorities in acute situations. This, together with long work shifts and lack of adequate protective equipment has led many to experience extremely stressful working environments.

This increased pressure has added a tremendous load on health systems, as they have been burdened with increasing loads of technology management and administration. These types of increasing pressures have already pre-pandemic been seen to lead to increases in moral distress and burn-outs among health workers, and to many of them leaving the professions.

For these reasons, it is urgent that medical education to an increasing degree integrates the teaching of skills for confronting uncertainty and systems change to ensure a sustainable working life. These, as well as inner and transformative aspects, should thus be integrated into medical education curricula, as they can increase health workers' inner capacities, collaborative capacities and change-making capacities.

• Betting on e-health and e-learning

E-learning is not just about logging on to an online platform and engaging with others via Zoom. It is about how students can be motivated and engaged by harnessing a range of learning technologies and innovative approaches that really bring students from different professions together. This requires a redesigning of curricula and an adjustment in the education system at the policy and the implementation level.

E-Learning can be more flexible and allow students to study anytime, anywhere, and is associated with decreased costs. Higher education will become more accessible to those who previously could not gain access due to physical and geographical barriers. However, for medical education, hands-on experiences in handling patients are required. To that end, all healthcare organizations (facilities) at all levels around every country could be optimally utilized.

Finally, we do not know all implications and consequences of the pandemic on medical education, but we firmly think that health professionals will have to train much more than they did so far in digital health. For instance, the healthcare workforce needs to be familiar with medical apps in order to recommend the most useful ones to their patients, as well as to learn how to use social media for health promotion or use health data science for making medical decisions. One way to do so is to incorporate information and communication technology into their education.

Therefore, a responsibility but also opportunities to rethink higher education are currently emerging. These changes and responses to it are strengthening universities' leadership for future challenges. While the operating halls have been radically transformed during the last centuries, the lecture halls remain nearly the same. **We need to act now** and incorporate all the knowledge gained during this pandemic to transform the way we educate the healthcare taskforce.

15 The Global Science Commons and Sustainable Development

by **Patrick Paul Walsh**, *Professor, University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland*

The UN Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) (2019) entitled "The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development" (1), highlights the vital role that science must play in addressing social inequalities and irreversible declines in the natural environment. Borrowing from 101 Economics, allowing the free movement of the factors of production to their best alternate use creates production

possibility frontiers for goods and services, in terms of dollar value. Similarly, resources given to science and mobility of science creates the stock of knowledge in the Global Science Commons. Yet the current knowledge, at point A, in the Global Science Commons is far inside the knowledge frontier required to create a sustainable operating space for humanity, at point B.
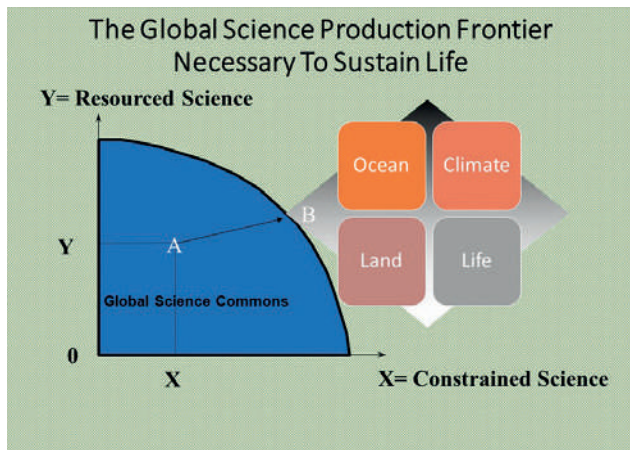
The creation of knowledge is very concentrated into a few resource rich universities. The report highlights the need to rebalance the Global Science Commons by investing in science for sustainable development in natural and social science institutions in both developed and developing countries. The report also highlights the need to prioritize boosting scientific capacity and access in the global south. Due to diminishing marginal returns from concentrating resources into a narrow set of universities, investing in the south is needed to move the world to a frontier of the Global Science Commons that can sustain a safe operating space for humanity. The UN 2030 Agenda calls for open access to all appropriate technologies and knowledge that can be transferred across nations and institutions via a Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

It is possible to design university programs in this direction. Unfortunately, these are not plenty. For example, at University College Dublin (UCD) we have set up two postgraduate programs that show how one can build capacity in academics and professionals working in the least developed countries. Since 2007, UCD facilitates staff in East African Universities to undertake a UCD Ph.D. across many disciplines, initially funded by HEA-Irish Aid. In 2020, Sunway University and UCD both introduced an online Masters in Sustainable Development in partnership with the SDG Academy. These Masters allow professionals all over the world to do M.Sc. coursework (online) and an SDG project (with many research partners) at low cost.

Since 2012 many universities have been working with the Sustainable Solutions Network (SDSN), led by Jeffery Sachs, to implement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in all corners of the world. Building capacity in the Global Science Commons for sustainable development has many challenges to overcome. The main one is that most leading universities are

> **66 Universities and their networks need to work towards encouraging governments, donor agencies and institutions worldwide to help fund open scientific cooperation across borders. 99**

primarily concerned with their own ranking and position in the global commons, without due consideration to building positive linkages and sharing capacities with other research institutions. This is essential to give humanity a fighting chance to have the global science to create a just and safe operating space for humanity by 2050. To be fair, the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings of Universities does move us in that direction but still promotes the individual university.

The role of universities in the Global Science Commons comes with the responsibility to create the knowledge needed to achieve sustainable development, but universities are also required to take the lead in the Science Policy Interfaces (SPI) at all levels of governance, including local, national, regional and UN levels of governance. There are new entry points for science to participate in UN meetings in the UN system. For example, like the IAU, UCD has secured consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and has both participated in and organised side events in many meetings of the UN HLPF under both the Economic and Social council and General Assembly. Knowledge needs to be disseminated and shared at great speed, as we have witnessed during the COVID-19 crisis. Universities need to take advantage of contemporary entry points for science into policymaking and use effective mechanisms, including digital innovation and modern libraries, to deliver and translate research for policy communities all over the world. Universities acting in global science commons need to find a way to cooperate at scale to explore all possibilities for effective Science Policy Interfaces at all levels of governance. They need to support each other across borders to be effective in all regions of the world. University networks can be the foundation stone for a new 21st century wave of stakeholder multilateralism.

Universities and their networks need to work towards encouraging governments, donor agencies and institutions worldwide to help fund open scientific cooperation across borders, to move to the frontier of sustainable development knowledge in the Global Science Commons and, to build the open knowledge platforms to enhance Science Policy interfaces at all levels of government in every corner of the planet.

16 École Polytechnique's Commitment towards Sustainable Development and Diversity

by **Eric Labaye**, *President of École Polytechnique and Institut Polytechnique de Paris, France*

Working towards the common good: this is what has been inspiring our School and our community for more than two centuries. When École Polytechnique was created in 1794, the French government entrusted it with the responsibility to offer a multidisciplinary education and research, and to promote innovation towards the prosperity of all. Therefore, as soon as students enter our institution, they are immersed in an environment where they learn values that will guide them throughout their education and their career: general interest and integrity. From the moment they start their Personal Development and Military Training, they are encouraged to find meaning in what they do, what impact they are seeking to have in society.

It is therefore natural for us to join the movement when states and institutions of higher education are called to build a more sustainable, more inclusive, more equal world. Two years ago, we formulated several strong commitments to place sustainable development at the core of our actions and improve social and gender diversity in scientific fields within our institution and across France.

Our students are the future engineers, innovators, responsible leaders, who will help us achieve sustainability and equality. The first step is thus to make sure all have access to the fundamental scientific knowledge in sustainable development. With a team of professors committed to implementing our actions towards sustainable development, we built a two-day seminar compulsory for all our students. In addition to that seminar, our students can volunteer to follow a more advanced course in that area, whatever their major may be. In partnership with a Chair between our School and Accenture, which aims to generate the development of innovative technologies to foster social and environmental sustainability, this certificate is the cornerstone of our training of excellence in environmental issues, combining education, research and innovation.

Innovation, entrepreneurship, and teamwork skills are essential components of our students' training program. Therefore, they have the opportunity to take part in student challenges, including one international, in which they have the mission to suggest economically viable and socially acceptable solutions to address climate change. The theme this year focused on the objective set by the Paris Agreement: local scale actions to implement in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

> **To improve our scientific knowledge and achieve sustainability, we need students and staff of all backgrounds and genders to contribute.**

When it comes to finding scientific and applicable solutions, research is key, and the union of all stakeholders of society is paramount. École Polytechnique, alongside four other schools, is building a world-class institute of science and technology, Institut Polytechnique de Paris, and one of its pillars is the creation of interdisciplinary centres. In 2019, we inaugurated the first centre for energy transition: Energy4Climate (E4C). Around 30 laboratories are working within E4C on four transversal themes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, deploy renewable energy distribution and evaluate public policies. The centre is empowered by the scientific knowledge of our researchers and the economical and industrial expertise of our corporate partners. It is also from that powerhouse that our training draws its strength as the centre organizes the international challenge, welcomes our students and develops an entrepreneurship program for young people who seek to create a start-up.

In order for all these talents to blossom and for these actors to play their part, we are building a campus, an environment, a community that agrees with their mindsets. Via a systemic approach, a carbon neutrality plan was drafted in 2020, the starting point to achieve sustainability on our campus. The results of that study proved that we still have a long way to go, with a total carbon footprint of 2.8 tCO_2e per person on campus in 2019, while the Paris Agreement recommends 2 tCO_2e. This analysis allowed us to understand where we have to focus on with our efforts: energy emissions by our infrastructures and transportation and mobility. By the end of 2021, our team will complete a climate plan, which will take us one step closer to being carbon neutral.

To improve our scientific knowledge and achieve sustainability, we need students and staff of all backgrounds and genders to contribute. Two years ago, we took a firm commitment towards the French government: double social diversity within five years. Among our measures, we launched a nationwide initiative led by students from our 2020 Ingénieur Polytechnicien program Class, who visited 200 French high schools to give the youth the self-confidence to enter the most competitive scientific fields. This initiative is one of the many we are undertaking to help everyone get the same chance to access studies of excellence.

In the battle against climate change, to ensure energy transition and establish a sustainable model worldwide, states and institutions set the stage, but it is up to local actors and the youth to come up with solutions: they are the heads and the hands of this fight.

17 The I3E model: a whole institution approach to embed Education for Sustainable Development within higher education institutions

*by **Gisela Cebrián Bernat**, Serra Hunter Fellow, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain*

This article presents an evidence-based model (the I3E Model) for embedding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within higher education institutions. This model emerged from a doctoral research at the University of Southampton (Cebrián, 2014; 2018), and seeks to contribute to a holistic transformation of universities in order to embed ESD within the curriculum. The I3E Model identifies four overarching components that can support and provide insights to universities in their journey towards embedding ESD: **INFORM** the university community about sustainability; **ENGAGE** the different university stakeholders in the change process towards sustainability; **EMPOWER** individuals and groups to make change happen within their sphere of influence and action; and **EMBED** sustainability within existing university structures.

INFORM includes developing a clear organisational vision and strategy on sustainability that is shared but contextualised within the different faculties and academic disciplines as a necessary first step to building awareness of ESD amongst the university community. Universities need to provide clear communication channels and strategies that can inform the university community on sustainability initiatives, and enable collaboration and the establishment of linkages between different groupings and individuals interested in ESD. Making existing ESD resources and champions at universities more visible through university communication channels would contribute to embedding ESD within the curriculum. Also, the creation of professional development and training opportunities can expand the work of individual academics and start changing the culture of the organisation. These are necessary to help academics develop an understanding of sustainability and ESD pedagogy, and their personal mastery (self-awareness) that would then enable them to embed ESD principles in their teaching practice.

ENGAGE focuses on the need for universities to become role models for their staff and students and ensure that policy documents are translated into clear action in practice. In this sense, the commitment and support of senior managers and leaders is critical to foster organisational learning and change towards sustainability. Thus, effective leadership towards

sustainability can translate into new structures, incentives, and funding.

Having examples of good practice, and role models or champions within the organisation, are key for academics' engagement in ESD. Also, collaboration between different university stakeholders and groups, such as administrative staff, academics, students, and the local community in the change process towards sustainability would create a shared vision. Student-led projects, staff-students' partnerships, and using the university environment and estates as a living laboratory would enact staff and student engagement to create a more sustainable university, enabling them to learn and experience sustainability in action. In terms of university governance, enhancing participatory decision-making processes, that enable staff and students to take ownership of the change process towards ESD, using bottom-up and top-down approaches, is fundamental.

EMPOWER refers to the need to provide support to individuals and teams to develop new understandings of, and practices in ESD. The creation of collaborative and interdisciplinary groups through action oriented, experiential, collaborative and reflective processes can enable 'learning-by-doing' processes, learn from each other and support team learning from real practice in a supportive way to empower individuals to develop new ESD practices.

Supportive internal structures that provide staff with the space, freedom, flexibility, resources, time and opportunity to participate in working groups and research projects in ESD need to be put in place to empower academics to embed ESD in their everyday practice; in conjunction with other strategies, such as reward systems, funding opportunities, research grants and recognition. In this sense, undergraduate research projects, master theses, and doctoral theses have a contribution to make in building organisational sustainability and empowering the wider university community. The creation of awards, competitions or prizes for research projects on sustainability could also contribute to the empowerment of staff and students to create organisational change towards sustainability.

EMBED acknowledges the creation of specific sustainability university structures as imperative to embedding ESD within the curriculum. Sustainability 'champion' universities have sustainability directors and sustainable centres, which is a clear first step to embedding sustainability in the university structures and lead to holistic organisational change. In this sense, the creation of a senior management position on sustainability, sustainability positions in the different faculties and academic units, a cross-faculty position to

> 66 Making existing ESD resources and champions at universities more visible through university communication channels would contribute to embedding ESD within the curriculum. 99

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promote ESD, adding sustainability as part of the promotion criteria, job descriptions, and research protocols and quality assurance processes would enable embedding sustainability within university structures. Enhancing sustainability and taking advantage of existing university structures such as the professional development units, the inter- and transdisciplinary projects and cross-faculty initiatives is also essential to embedding ESD across universities.

The I3E model is not a step-by-step guide for achieving sustainability; on the contrary, its main purpose is to inspire universities to enhance organisational learning and move towards embedding sustainability.

18 Universities as sustainable service providers
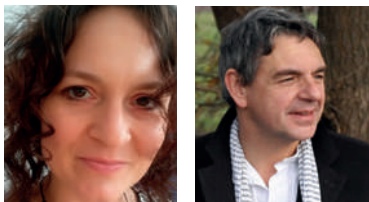
by **Margit Stein**, *University of Vechta, Germany* and **Detlev Lindau-Bank**, *Head of RCE Oldenburger Münsterland, Germany*

The University of Vechta is part of the IAU HESD global cluster for SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

With regard to *SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production*, universities see themselves more as consumers of sustainable products than as producers. Universities often emphasize within their self-descriptions that the procurement management strategy pays attention to the use of sustainable and energy-efficient as well as climate-friendly products (e.g. in the canteen, in building design and facility management).

It gets more complicated when universities intend to present themselves as providers of sustainable products. This is due to the general perception that universities are seen as 'producers' in research, as 'developers' and 'producers' of new and promising products. Sustainability and climate-friendly 'production' of research output and innovation have long been common. The situation is different when universities are understood as producers of knowledge, not in the sense of a product, but of a service. When asked «What does the university actually produce?» the answer should be: «human capital and resources».

This is a risky assumption, as it can be misunderstood as a purely business management perspective, in which universities

> **"** The imposition of an economic logic to higher education, and of the efficiency and efficacy dynamics to universities, contradicts the pedagogical logic and overall principle according to which quality teaching and learning take time. **"**

act as service providers on the market. In this sense, academic education is tailored only to the needs of the labor market and students are trained only regarding their value for this labor market. Such assumption would require extensive restructuring of course content. The knowledge imparted then must be consistently geared towards increasing the economic value of the students. At the same time, the course must be more efficient and faster overall, and the content must be modernized.

Here we see the challenges for universities when they are solely considered as service provider. Education for sustainable development and the integration of SD specific content in courses and study trajectories is fostered as a modernization of the course contents. The imposition of an economic logic to higher education, and of the efficiency and efficacy dynamics to universities, contradicts the pedagogical logic and overall principle according to which quality teaching and learning take time and offer for a broad learning experience and an essential opportunity to acquire an 'outside the box' critical thinking aptitude or competence. That is why, as part of our work in the context of the IAU HESD sub-cluster focusing on SDG 12, question the assumption according to which universities would be service providers. Dealing with this question makes sense to us in three ways.

1. Consumer and producer of sustainable services

A characteristic feature of services is that the time of production of the service and consumption coincide, respectively are identical (Uno-Actu-principle). So, the effectiveness and quality of the service depends on the intensity and quality of the interactions between the service provider (here: the university is considered the seller) and the consumer (here the student is considered as the buyer). In the case of universities, the provider-consumer relation and the quality of it is difficult to measure quantitatively, because the immateriality of services (teaching and learning) makes it difficult, if not impossible, to quantify how it affects the development of competencies and human resources.

2. The process of providing services

So, if students are producers and consumers of the service at the same time, then the service must be provided in a cooperative manner.

According to Porter (1985), universities can be viewed as service organizations, i.e. as a system of processes made up of subsystems each with inputs, transformation processes and outputs. These activities can be classified generally as either primary or support activities. Experience and research show that HEIs are already very well positioned in the area of supporting processes. Universities have made systematic progress in technical and measurable areas (i.e., facility management; waste management; catering, etc.) that need to be designed in a sustainable manner.

In the area of teaching, we have observed individual actions and projects rather than systematic change or whole institution approaches to SD. We see this as lack of leadership in the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). In order to ensure a transformation of knowledge into sustainable action patterns, activating study concepts have to be developed and students should be more involved in the design and implementation of the study programs on an equal footing.

Certificates and diplomas should be more internationally comparable and should emphasize which competences students have acquired in the field of sustainable lifestyles and professional practice. Not in the sense of a selective performance assessment, but an integrative description and appreciation of services provided.

3. Leadership

When leadership and leadership styles are discussed in service companies, the controversial concept of «Servant Leadership» by Greenleaf (2002) is often referred to. According to this, Servant Leadership begins with the need of the leader to first make his own contribution to the welfare of an organization or their members and ends with the trust that those being led place in the leadership of this person. Management as a service relies on the intrinsic motivation, personal responsibility, freedom of decision and personal development of employees. If this is successful in universities with regard to the teaching staff, the relationship between teaching staff and students is not yet shaped by this concept. Reorientation of the university management as a service provider is not a guarantee for the implementation of ESD in HEI. However, it is to be seen as a necessary condition to achieve SD if universities are to professionalize service processes.

However, SDG 12 and in particular Sub-Goal 12.8 ("*By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature*") cannot be achieved if we only use quantitative indicators to measure achievements. The provision of some relevant information may be measured, but this would lead to reducing HEIs to their function as a knowledge provider. The fact that the university is as much a laboratory and experimental field for the development of social capital would not be considered.

19 The key role of systemic leadership for inclusive education and the sustainability of higher education institutions

by **Panagiotis Kaldis**, *Professor and Rector of the University of West Attica, Greece* and **Anna Saiti**, *Professor, University of West Attica, Greece*

The stimulating and positive effect of sustainable and systemic leadership on the implementation of inclusive education in higher education institutions becomes apparent, in the practical sense, in this study. This article, through the actual experience of the University of West Attica, suggests that systemic and sustainable leadership has a positive effect on the implementation of inclusive education in higher education institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges for higher education, of which the main ones are: the effective implementation of inclusivity in higher education, the adoption of new technologies as auxiliary tools that support the learning process, and the adoption of systemic leadership to transform higher education institutions into sustainable systems that can ensure the sustainability of their practices. But how can a leader in a higher education institution, who works in a complex and diverse education system, integrate complex practices that promote social justice, quality and equal education for all? Systemic and sustainable leadership as a basic form of leadership behaviour not only includes actions on the part of the leader to convey their institution's vision and achieve the leadership goals, but also emphasizes the concept of teamwork and the interaction of organizational members (Saiti, 2021). In order for a systemic and sustainable form of leadership to be implemented, strong foundations of trust and a positive climate in the organization are needed between the members and the leadership of their higher education institution, and this certainly cannot happen overnight. It takes time, organizational support, flexible communication channels and a leader to inspire members and help solve problems. The development of the fundamental social values of equality and social justice are the key elements that can transform an organization into a community in practice.

The University of West Attica is a new higher educational institution that has resulted from the merger of two

> **Higher education [should foster]: collaboration and solidarity, the cultivation of (…) creativity and justice, (…) diversity and the development of organizational members' skills and capabilities.**

technological institutions located in the Athens area. Although such a merger could cause difficulties in the development of the new educational institution, this was not the case in practice since the process was, and is, supported by the organization through a high degree of internal integration and the consolidation of human resources. The staff of the University of West Attica are active participants that are not indifferent towards their institution. For this reason, the University of West Attica has implemented (and continues to implement) innovative policies and practices that effectively support a sustainable community. This could only be achieved through the devotion and commitment of its staff.

With regard to standards of behaviour among organizational members, it is important to have a positive culture orientation in order to nurture a culture of inclusivity that can facilitate the sustainability of higher education institutions. A positive and inclusive culture requires a good leader and not just a remarkable manager. Only a leader beyond the power of his/her position may inspire staff members and gain their voluntary / WILLING cooperation and participation in order to achieve the best results (Saitis & Saiti, 2018). Moreover, the success of an organizational change depends to a large extent on whether the educational institution functions as a community in practice. So how can a higher education institution successfully transform into a community in practice? The answer is a strategy of continuity with an orientation that benefits ALL, namely the implementation of sustainable and systemic leadership. A sustainable leader is not someone who simply communicates their vision; sustainable and systemic leadership alone cannot ensure social and educational betterment (Miles & Singal, 2010). To be successful, the only required prerequisite is to simply have the desire to WANT it so as to move forward with the steps necessary to obtain it.

The COVID-19 health crisis has brought to the surface the need to use technological tools in the learning process. More than ever, the real concept of inclusivity in the educational and learning process has become the biggest challenge in higher education (Arar, Saiti & Prokopiadou, 2021). The body responsible for implementing practices that applaud diversity in the educational and learning process is the leadership of higher educational institutions.

Therefore, a sustainable higher education community should place more emphasis on citizenship while certain virtues must be put into practice: collaboration and solidarity, the cultivation of a spirit of creativity and justice, the acknowledgement of diversity and the development of

organizational members' skills and capabilities. This requires the constant pursuit of better quality services for all citizens (without discrimination) while maintaining the ability of higher education to function over time without restrictions, to prevent any disruption, to promote efficiency and to develop local cultures.

Hence, sustainable and systemic leadership should be a fundamental priority of higher education institutions so that the leadership can focus on social justice, respond to the challenges of their complicated role, introduce innovations and thus radically change the fundamental characteristics of the higher education system to defend the values of all those involved in the educational process. It may be difficult to implement but it is not impossible. It just requires synergy.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARRIBEAN

20 Forging Global Partnerships for More Sustainable Futures: The UWI charts its course as an activist university in the Global South

by **Stacy Richards-Kennedy**, *Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Affairs, The University of the West Indies*

The University of the West Indies is the IAU HESD Global Cluster lead on SDG 13: Climate Action

Established during the Caribbean's pre-independence period, The University of the West Indies (The UWI) has grown significantly over the past 73 years, evolving into today's top-ranked, internationally-recognized university with roughly 50,000 students and 9,000 staff members across five Campuses. Deeply committed to advancing Caribbean development, The UWI has been a pivotal force in producing knowledge, nurturing leaders and promoting advocacy on a range of pressing issues, particularly those affecting the small island developing states (SIDS) of the Caribbean.

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Within the framework of the 2030 sustainable development agenda, universities located in the Global South, such as the UWI, play an even more critical role in highlighting the universal and interconnected nature of the global goals. Not only does the international community need to be reminded of large disparities that continue to exist both between and within countries. These are apparent on many fronts, such as access to digital technologies, public and private investment in research and development (R&D), the percentage of the population enrolled in higher education, and vaccine access during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Undoubtedly, developing countries continue to lag significantly behind the developed countries of the North. Moreover, in the area of climate change, the devastating effects of global warming are disproportionately felt by SIDS located in the Global South.

In spite of being located in a region that has experienced low growth and high debt for successive decades, the UWI, as an activist university, has continued to leverage the scientific knowledge produced by its researchers across many disciplines to strengthen the science-policy interface and underscore the important role played by universities in helping countries move closer to agreed development targets. Serving countries that are on the frontline of the climate crisis also reinforces the multiple vulnerabilities of these territories and the need for urgent collective action. This has been an important impetus for the UWI's work leading the Global University Consortium on SDG-13 within the IAU Global Cluster on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development.

In 2021, the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings placed the UWI among the top 2.5% of universities working on advancing the Sustainable Development Goals based on its performance in leadership and stewardship, research output and teaching and advocacy. However, it is worth emphasizing that in order to generate and sustain tangible results for greater development impact, support for three important elements will need to be mobilized: a critical mass of scientific inquiry and evidence to drive research-informed policies and action; funding to provide fiscal oxygen for public universities to engage in research translation and to pursue new, innovative projects that support the execution of their 'third mission'; and a robust network of partners to amplify reach and achieve scale.

Strategic Planning and Global Engagement

The UWI's global engagement activities are anchored in the university's wider 'Triple A' A 'Strategic Plan 2017-2022, which is focused on revitalizing Caribbean development and strengthening Access, Alignment and Agility. An integral part of the UWI's global engagement strategy has been its leadership as an SDG-engaged university, working in collaboration with a range of institutional partners, to stimulate new teaching and research collaborations as well as new resource mobilization and internationalization opportunities from which faculty, students, and by extension,

> 66 By maximizing the opportunities stimulated by our global engagement activities, we are charting our own course towards greater institutional resilience, while at the same time, continuing to contribute to building resilience at the community and country levels. 99

the communities and industries served by our regional university, will continue to benefit.

A network of UWI global centres across North America, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia, together with a host of university collaborations and participation in international university consortia have led to projects that are contributing to promoting social justice, strengthening academic-industry partnerships and shaping more sustainable futures for diverse communities. For example, the SUNY-UWI Centre for Leadership and Sustainable Development has brought together faculty from SUNY and UWI Campuses to collaborate on research related to chronic diseases and public health, online certificate, degrees and professional development training in transformational leadership to achieve the SDGs and advocacy on the importance of global partnerships in support of climate action. The UWI also co-chairs the *Commonwealth Climate Resilience Network* and was recently invited to join the *International Universities Climate Alliance* led by the University of New South Wales. The UWI will also participate later this year in the *One Ocean Expedition* in collaboration with our IAU Global Cluster SDG-14 lead, University of Bergen, which will bring together researchers, faculty and students committed to advancing research and sharing knowledge on the preservation of marine resources, as part of the *United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development*.

Recognizing the need for increased efforts to preserve our ocean resources while at the same time, supporting the marine-based economies of the Caribbean, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UWI established a joint Public Policy Think Tank for a Blue Economy. The UWI also co-chairs the International Steering Committee for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy at the UWI Five Islands Campus in Antigua and Barbuda. The UWI's Global Institute for Climate-Smart and Resilient Development will harness the vast expertise across all five Campuses related to climate change, resilience, climate justice, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.

By maximizing the opportunities stimulated by our global engagement activities, we are charting our own course towards greater institutional resilience, while at the same time, continuing to contribute to building resilience at the community and country levels.

IN FOCUS

21 Developing Global and Responsible Citizens for a Better Future
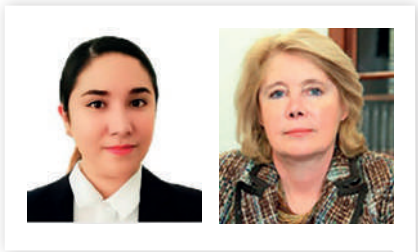
by **Guadalupe Vázquez-Niño** *and* **Jocelyne Gacel-Ávila**, *Researchers at Observatory on Internationalization and Networks in Tertiary Education for Latin America and The Caribbean (OBIRET), University of Guadalajara, Mexico*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) has opened up new debates in higher education. Universities have been seen as key actors that can generate innovative ideas, train professionals, produce research, and contribute in other different ways to its achievement.

Although the SDGs include a variety of themes, special attention has been given to "Global Citizenship Education" (GCED) which is stated in the target 4.7 of the 2030 global agenda:

> *GCED aims to empower learners to engage and assume active roles locally, nationally and globally, to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive secure and sustainable world.*

How is internationalization related to the SDGs?

Universities from around the globe have implemented internationalization strategies according to different rationales, including to enhance the quality of education and research, to prepare students for the labour market, or to foster regional identity. However, internationalization has also been considered as the pathway to develop different sorts of global competences in students, such as, the ones of global citizenship.

Although there is no consensus on what a global citizen is, there have been several attempts to at least understand the attributes that identify them. A global citizen therefore will respect human rights and cultural diversity, participate in the solution of local and global issues, feel empathy, respect and curiosity towards the understanding of other cultures, and have the ability to interact and work successfully in intercultural settings.

There is even a global trend at higher education institutions that justify internationalization in their institutional development plans as the pathway to achieve an education for global citizens, and this is the case of University of Guadalajara, located in Mexico.

The potential of University of Guadalajara to educate global citizens through internationalization

A master's degree thesis undertaken as part of the dual degree MA program in International Higher Education at the *Center for International Higher Education* (CIHE) at Boston College, and University of Guadalajara (UdeG) explored the potential that study abroad has to strengthen values, attitudes and skills of GC.

The research focused on BA outbound credit mobility students from UdeG who studied abroad during an academic semester in different international destinations. Through a mixed method which consisted of a quantitative survey and a qualitative semi-structured interview, students were asked to reflect and share their study abroad experiences when they came back to their homes in Mexico.

The principal research findings pointed out that through these international academic experiences, students learned to appreciate cultural diversity, remove biases, find the connection between global and local problems, and most of them developed inspiration to work in benefit of others. Moreover, one of the thesis' conclusions was that internationalization has the potential to develop global citizens.

It is important to highlight, however, that the reduction of physical mobility due to the current health crisis, and the limited number of students and scholars who can typically go abroad are just a few; this is an important reason why university authorities should consider different internationalization strategies rather than only "study abroad" to develop global citizens.

Some examples of internationalization strategies that can help GCED in a local context are: the implementation of contents, materials, and activities within the formal curriculum with global and intercultural perspectives; the use of virtual mobility, including Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL); and events such as the International Book Fair (FIL) that takes place every year in the city of Guadalajara, México. This event offers the opportunity to gather scholars and students from different parts of the world.

What could universities do to help target 4.7 of the SDG4?

Although international academic experiences could offer the possibility to develop GC competences in students, university authorities should consider that there is still work ahead to truly contribute to the SDGs in this sense.

Some aspects that should be considered at the institutional level are:

1. The importance of measuring and monitoring to what extent internationalization activities are developing GC competences in students.

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our ability to determine the probability of outcomes. Yet the knowledge of these probabilities is essential to traditional management of risk, whether protecting against external hazards or investing to achieve desired institutional goals. Uncertain times also generate unanticipated resources that can be tapped by novel collaborations and new investments. Yet overly managed and budgeted systems create barriers to these unconventional collaborations and time-sensitive investments.

> The reduction of physical mobility due to the current health crisis, and the limited number of students and scholars who can typically go abroad are just a few; this is an important reason why university authorities should consider different internationalization strategies rather than only "study abroad" to develop global citizens.

2. The development of a strong leadership network of students, faculty, and staff members that support the SDGs target.

3. An explicit and formal commitment in the university policy, that recognizes the contribution of internationalization for the achievement GCED, and its relation to target 4.7.

4. A report of results that shows periodically the main achievements, challenges, and opportunities towards the target 4.7.

With unpredictable change come new leadership opportunities. Volunteerism is an alternative way of organizing human activity that depends on identifying compelling causes to mobilize volunteers. While not new, volunteerism can be a model for mobilizing collaborative scholarly work —with the right cause. The 17 United Nations' *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) generated by "the world" to guide development to 2030 are a response to increasingly fragile ecosystems and precarious livelihoods. Within a voluntary model, the SDGs act as their own resource by enumerating socially compelling causes to confront growing global instability. In the case of sustainability, a voluntary model excels given sustainable development's long-term focus on future generations where risks over this time horizon are not easily calculable and allocation of large resources by individual players is not prudent. As shareable goals, the SDGs can instead readily mobilize a diversity of interests, whether students, faculty, administration, staff, alumni, or community partners.

NORTH AMERICA

22 Leadership for Uncertain Times: Using the UN SDGs to Mobilize Shared Resources Across Universities

Leadership to mobilize volunteers differs from traditional academic models (for example, mobilizing scholarship through funded competitions or research chairs). Since 2018, the *International Association of Universities (IAU)* Sub-Cluster on SDG 12 ("Responsible Consumption and Production") has relied on open, sharing models to engage universities. In seeking partners, the Cluster initially identified institutions already predisposed to participate in sustainability collaboration (whether as active IAU members or in networks such as RCEs). Showcasing partner universities was an important first step in identifying what each might contribute to SDG 12. The development of shared priorities, in turn, has helped mobilize the resources of each.

by **Roger A. Petry**, *Professor of Philosophy, Luther College at the University of Regina* and **Jocelyn Crivea**, *Research Institute Project & Development Manager, Office of the Associate Vice-President (Research), University of Regina, Canada*

Luther College at the University of Regina is IAU HESD global cluster lead on SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

A voluntary model implies a gentle form of non-coercive leadership that is sensitive to the autonomy and willingness of individuals and participating organizations to contribute because they see a need that is not being met by existing structures. From the beginning, the Cluster's leadership has been based on building foundational relationships and personalizing the process to build trust for further cooperation. Rather than a hierarchical structure of top-down decision making and rigid meetings, the Cluster encourages new initiatives among its members through regular bi-monthly check-ins, identifying possibilities, and consensus building while allowing each member to move at their own pace. This is not a transactional style of leadership but one that harnesses the group's shared energy and strengths as it is available and offered. The Cluster has not been without its challenges, and external forces affecting its respective communities have continually been at play, including (but not limited) to the

How do we lead in uncertain times? In *The Politics of Uncertainty* (2020), Ian Scoones and Andy Stirling argue that growing instability (whether economic, political, or ecological) impairs

> **By mobilizing as whole institutions around the common cause of SDG 12 alongside the other SDG university clusters in the IAU network, a new path of leadership is being created to address the growing "incalculable" risks we face.**

pandemic. For instance, due to COVID an in-person conference was moved to a virtual format in 2020, and the focus on consumption and production has been expanded to include medical waste, food insecurity (with disruption of trade) and campus self-sufficiency. Openness and flexibility are needed to build acceptance and understanding, take action, add new members as needed, and shift priorities—especially when a participant's capacities become limited by changing local demands and circumstances.

Through the group's initial efforts, it is well-poised to move from initial exchanges of ideas and best practices to more profound inter-university cooperation. Member contributions were initially identified, celebrated, and promoted at SDG 12 Cluster conferences in 2019 and 2020, and through presentations at international panels such as at a UN *High Level Political Forum* side-event in 2021. The Cluster's own members actively promote SDG 12 on their participating campuses (for example, by embedding it in institutional strategic plans) and to outside organizations (through journal publications and academic conferences). Members also support each other by co-authoring articles and writing institutional support letters for grant proposals. A long-term goal is to create formal linkages around responsible consumption and production between multiple parts of each university (for example, procurement offices), employing the same voluntary and participatory model that has succeeded to date. It is envisioned that in an environment of growing unpredictability, these linkages will allow all university Cluster members to mobilize many small investments from multiple areas within and between each participating university. By mobilizing as whole institutions around the common cause of SDG 12 alongside the other SDG university clusters in the IAU network, a new path of leadership is being created to address the growing "incalculable" risks we face.

23 Youth in Action: Supporting SDG Contributions by Students

by **Zachary Czuprynski**,
Sustainability Coordinator VISTA, Prescott College, USA

Students across the world are more involved in climate activism and actions for sustainable development than ever before. As educators,

we have a duty to encourage the passionate pursuits of our student leaders and provide them with systems of support that can facilitate and actualize their ideas. This article will highlight specific resources that support sustainable student initiatives and, in turn, student contributions to the SDGs through senior capstone projects within the context of Prescott College, Arizona. A brief discussion on successes and challenges of these systems will be concluded with recommendations for measuring impact of student projects.

Surveys have shown that students, specifically of Gen Z, are increasingly pursuing experiences, degrees, and careers in environmental and sustainability-related fields (Thomas, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2021). In preparation for these opportunities, students should have the freedom to use their educational journey as a living lab—rich with experiential and immersive learning, reflective thinking, and adaptability—while educators in higher education institutions have a duty to encourage the passionate pursuits of student leaders and provide systems of support that can facilitate and actualize their ideas. In the piney highlands of Arizona, the Green Mountain Center for Sustainability of Prescott College enables student leaders to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with senior capstone projects by providing three systems of support: a Sustainability Council, a Sustainability Fund, and a Sustainability Coordinator.

The Sustainability Council is a unique and diverse steering committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students that establish sustainability goals and objectives valued across the community. It monitors and assesses projects, recommends policies and initiatives to the college, and convenes various stakeholder groups to gather input. Specifically, the Council provides decision-making power to students who can elevate pressing needs of the student community, which may otherwise not be directly obvious to faculty or staff, and propose unique solutions to meet those needs.

The Council also allocates the college's Sustainability Fund which pools $50 per semester from each student to reduce upfront costs of student projects dedicated to advancing the SDGs on campus or within the broader Prescott community. Any students can apply to use the funds through a comprehensive proposal process set and guided by the Sustainability Council. It also serves as a learning opportunity for students to cultivate grant writing skills, an invaluable experience which can transfer to numerous future professions. To ensure the funding process is accessible and equitable, a mentor may be assigned to guide students through the proposal process.

> **It is a duty of higher education institutions to be leaders of progressive change for the protection of social justice and environmental health of current and future generations.**

The third system of support, a product of student input, is the college's Sustainability Coordinator. The coordinator leverages input and ideas of students, supports the growth and development of student projects, and establishes systems to measure project impact. Moreover, the coordinator fosters relationships between campus and the Prescott community, connecting students with opportunities to get involved with community events and organizations.

Many inspiring and impactful student projects have flourished with these supporting resources. A campus Free Store features clothing, food, electronics, and other accessories donated by students and local organizations, diverting valuable material from landfills into the hands of someone in need. Two on-site composting systems eliminate post-consumer food waste on campus and generate a source of nutrients for campus gardens. Roof catchment systems collect valuable rainwater that irrigate on-campus food production. Solar panels power our residential housing with clean, renewable energy.

These projects are a few samples of success that student capstone projects can have in addressing sustainability-related needs and, in turn, the SDGs. Capstone projects provide an opportunity for students to create real-world tangible impacts and are an object to measure student success beyond the traditional indicators of grades and "time to graduation." These indicators tell a limited story of student comprehension of and contributions to the SDGs. Students are, after all, the next generation—the ones who will fill new and expanding job roles that address sustainability challenges. How can we track their impact in a way that tells a more complete story—one that is tangible and useful? Perhaps taking internationally-established indicators and applying them to the context and scope of student capstones could provide more insight into the contributions of our students locally and beyond.

Whatever the case, we recognize the need for a solutions-based approach of higher education to address wicked problems—those resisting simple solutions—in the age of climate crisis and growing economic disparity. The lessons we learn and share along the way are more important than ever. Besides the basic work of supporting students and building a sense of community on campus and beyond, we must continue to provide leadership, locally and nationally. In my opinion, it is a duty of higher education institutions to be leaders of progressive change for the protection of social justice and environmental health of current and future generations, and to resist cultural systems and practices that are simply not sustainable. In one form or another, it's the essential work of our time, and it's inspiring to see students leading the way.

MIDDLE EAST

24 Implementing SDGs at Beirut Arab University: Turning Challenges into Innovative Opportunities
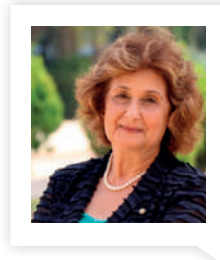
by **Ibtihal Y. El-Bastawissi**, *Dean of Faculty of Architecture – Design and Built Environment, Beirut Arab University*

BAU is the IAU HESD Global Cluster lead on SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.

Over the past couple of years, Lebanon, in particular, faced many downgrades and several unprecedented challenges, some of which are: political unrest, economic hyperinflation, spread of an unfamiliar deadly pandemic- that affected nations worldwide, and most recently, Beirut Port explosion that has damaged almost half of the capital city's neighbourhoods. The massive explosion in Beirut, located in the main commercial port and hub, resulted in catastrophic, everlasting outcomes, leaving a trail of destruction across the city, physically and mentally; in addition to causing a large number of martyrs, wounded, and missing people. BAU's commitment continues in addressing social issues through students' empowerment to efficiently impact their communities. Services and engagement after Beirut Blast have been BAU's main intention, with keen involvement in the process of not only assessing the damages, but also volunteering productively on the field and in-depth technical support regarding the site's reconstruction.

In the face of that, BAU has pledged support to the people of Beirut in their painful plight. Since day one of this detrimental occurrence, BAU firmly dedicated all its resources, capabilities, technical assistance, the staff members' high expertise and students' involvement on citizens' disposition, and those in charge of rescue, restoration and reconstruction operations. Nevertheless, BAU's collaboration with UN-Habitat for conducting preliminary assessment of the damages that occurred in the affected neighbourhoods. Alongside BAU's efforts in mitigating the effects of the disaster with the support of youth members, as Diogenes – the Greek Philosopher once said: "The foundation of every state is the education of its youth".

As the world changes, so do the needs, where promoting innovation, and creativity should reflect and provide not only for

> **BAU's collaborative spirit is achieved by the program's ability to link the groups with various faculty members, as an innovative approach, aiming at building a vibrant entrepreneurial community, transforming the program into a dynamic platform to encourage, support and foster new technologies.**

the present but prepare for the future. Therefore, BAU, since its participation in the IAU Global Cluster on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development and since becoming the SDG 9 leading institution, has set a strategic plan based on four pillars. With these factors in mind, the BAU incubator aims to create job opportunities and to develop solutions to social and economic problems, producing income generating activities in remote areas and redistributing profit to marginalized citizens, while protecting the country's environmental and natural resources, assisting the government in supplying quality services to citizens, promoting social cohesion between communities and sectarian groups and a culture of entrepreneurship and social awareness in Lebanon. The program has invested, ever since its launch, in three brilliant groups focusing on innovative building technologies. BAU's collaborative spirit is achieved by the program's ability to link the groups with various faculty members, as an innovative approach, aiming at building a vibrant entrepreneurial community, transforming the program into a dynamic platform to encourage, support and foster new technologies. Thus, the first cluster has been successfully established by the program, mainly focusing on building construction technology.

Currently, being part of a leading Lebanese academic institute that intends to expand the facility and its impact on the community, the BAU incubator provides access to all the university's labs and research centres for further beneficial values. The first start-up launched in 2019 by our program is called INFRASTIC – which is a concrete block mix, an advanced construction technology developed by a team of three students from Beirut Arab University who have won several prizes, such as UN's YLP 5. In addition, BAU – the faculty of Architecture – Design & Built Environment Team has won the international competition "Cool Abu Dhabi Competition" organized by the Department of Municipalities and Transportation of Abu Dhabi aiming to improve the outdoor thermal comfort in Abu Dhabi's public squares by implementing creative ideas.

Moreover, and within the framework of "Youth-Led Rehabilitation Efforts to Support Local Communities affected By the Beirut Blast" initiative, BAU in partnership with UNESCO, UNFPA and UNODC collaborated in developing children's emotional attachment to the territory of Beirut Blast. This 6-month project included several activities including the organization of workshops targeting children, capacity building for schools' teachers as well as an exhibition entitled "Beirut Miniature Model Art Exhibition to introduce Cultural Heritage to Children".

BAU has always had an aspiring academic level, that always intends to induce the entrepreneurial culture and innovation within its research lines, themes, and courses. These are rendered through the projects inspired by leadership and design courses at the university level, the mandatory internship courses, and by publications, where BAU releases six scholarly journals annually – supported by Elsevier's digital commons platform. As for the infrastructural synergies, BAU offers a myriad of facilities with focused dedication to educating students and communities into entrepreneurial attitude. Achieved by its four campuses, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) related labs such as BAU Urban Lab, Environmental Lab, Digital Fabrication Lab, Virtual Reality Lab, Material Science Lab, Engineering labs, etc. and the human science research facilities including libraries, studios, center for continuous education. Leadership at all levels, and these activities are for students, staff and all are bringing forward sustainability at the institution and beyond.

ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

25 Why global challenges call for collaborative leadership

by **Joanna Newman**, *Chief Executive and Secretary General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)*

Few events in recent history have illustrated the importance of international collaboration more vividly and persuasively than COVID-19. The speed with which the virus spread highlighted the interconnected and increasingly interdependent nature of the world today. We saw how sharing knowledge and data enabled us to track and understand the virus far more effectively than could have been achieved alone. But we also witnessed how national interests and global cooperation too often collide, prompting UN Secretary-General António Guterres to make a plea for what he described as 'human solidarity' (1). 'Global governance', he argued, 'must be based on a recognition that such solidarity is not only a moral imperative; it is in everyone's interests'. Shared threats, he warned, can only be tackled through shared resolve.

So, what does this mean for academic leadership? Tackling the complex and interconnected challenges of sustainable

development arguably calls for a new vision of leadership with collaboration at its heart: one which draws on the knowledge and expertise of a far wider circle – multiple disciplines, local communities, and international partners – and in doing so acknowledges that solutions can and do come from anywhere.

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) has placed the Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of its mission: to build a better world through higher education. Through our coalition with the IAU and the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, we are vocal champions both within the sector and beyond for the crucial role of higher education in meeting all 17 of the SDGs. We do not pretend to have all the answers – there is no 'one size fits all' approach – but we believe that universities do, and never more so than when they work together. Our role is to help make this happen.

The infinite potential for collaboration on the SDGs lies in the diversity of our network. ACU member universities span every continent and over 50 countries. They can be found in small island states, sprawling metropolises, and remote rural areas. They may be research intensive or community focused, secular or faith-based, public, private or open, and include two-thirds in low- and middle-income countries. The wealth of knowledge that exists within them is extraordinary, but it's through collaboration that solutions can be shared, multiplied, and turned into action on the greatest scale.

The ACU's global communities of practice connect 2,000 colleagues working in areas key to achieving the SDGs, including climate resilience, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and integrating the SDGs into university teaching and operations. Each of these networks promotes shared knowledge and joint action across disciplines and borders.

But can collaboration help us to tackle one of higher education's most pressing challenges: improving access? The ACU's PEBL project suggests it can. The Partnership for Enhanced and Blended Learning (PEBL) was developed in response to challenges in accessing higher education across east Africa, where a shortage of resources and soaring student numbers left universities struggling to meet demand. PEBL brought academics together with experts in digital learning technologies to build capacity in online learning delivery and share virtual teaching resources between universities. To date, more than 10,000

students have benefited from PEBL's quality-assured, credit-bearing courses – a testament to the power of partnerships.

Of course, international partnerships are not without potential pitfalls: even the most well-intentioned arrangements can reflect the unequal world in which we live: the wealthiest, best-equipped universities have often wielded disproportionate control over the goals and terms of research partnerships, and had a significant advantage as they vie for funding. This has led to unequal outcomes, unfairly shared.

Equitable partnerships are those which value the contributions of all involved and draw strength from diverse ways of knowing and thinking. Fairness and equity are increasingly at the heart of such arrangements, helping to ensure that the benefits of working together are equally shared and that all involved have a voice in shaping the way forward – not least those whom the partnership seeks to support.

With this more democratic approach to leadership and the creation of knowledge comes a recognition that anyone can choose to take responsibility for leading sustainability in their communities. In recent years, we have seen the next generation take to the streets to call for justice for our planet. Many of these young people don't need reminding that sustainability matters. But what they *do* need are opportunities to fulfil their potential and turn this passion into solutions. Here, international scholarships and exchange can be transformative, giving tomorrow's leaders a chance to gain collaborative and intercultural skills, and a greater sense of themselves as global citizens.

This, perhaps, brings us back to that sense of global consciousness – that 'human solidarity' of which António Guterres spoke; and it is arguably something on which our shared hopes for sustainable development will depend.

26 Bibliotheca Alexandrina Supports Youth Leadership Initiatives for Sustainable Development

by **Abdelhamid Riham**, *Coordinator, Sustainable Development Studies, Youth Capacity Building, and African Relations Support Program, and* **Elwakil Marwa**, *Head, Academic Research Sector, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt*

> ❝ The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) has placed the Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of its mission: to build a better world through higher education. Through our coalition with the IAU and the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, we are vocal champions both within the sector and beyond for the crucial role of higher education in meeting all 17 of the SDGs. ❞

> **Young people must rise up to take leadership positions, the path is yours to construct and pursue.**
> Kofi Annan, Former United Nations Secretary-General

Sustainable development (SD) is defined as a "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Report, 1987) and has three main pillars: economic, environmental, and social (IISD). Stressing the urgency for action, the United Nations with all UN Member States adopted Agenda 2030 for Sustainable development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015.

Egypt is one of the early supporters of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs. A working plan called Egypt's Vision 2030 was launched, a national agenda to achieve SDGs, in 2016. Its implementation, monitoring and evaluation are given high priority.[3]

Leadership, as understood in the context of this article, is a process of empowering people to maximize the efforts towards the achievement of a certain goal. Academic leadership in mainstreaming SD to achieve its goals and agenda is essential. Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) aims to be a center of excellence in the production and dissemination of knowledge, and to be a place of dialogue, learning and understanding between cultures and peoples. Though the BA is not a higher education institution yet, the BA supports higher education via its BA Academic Research Sector (BA AR Sector) and its different centers and programs. The BA AR Sector plays an integral and commentary role to higher education institutions with a special emphasizes on building capacities especially of youth, and empowering them to become future leaders.

One of these programs is the Sustainable Development Studies, Youth Capacity Building and African Relations Support Program (SDSP). SDSP aims to build capacities of university students in the field of SD in order to create a new generation of leaders capable of leading different organizations in the future and of integrating SD concepts and practices in these organization. These youth are considered agents of change, mobilizing to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. "Young people must rise up to take leadership positions, the path is yours to construct and pursue." Kofi Annan, Former United Nations Secretary-General in a Youth Conference in 2017.

The BA-activating leadership for sustainable development programs involves three stages: Awareness, Understanding and Action. Consequently, weekly programs are organized at BA in order to raise their awareness regarding SD and to provide them with a platform where they interact and present their different views on achieving SDGs. Diverse initiatives and programs were organized in cooperation with several international and national organizations, to name few, are: UN Resident Coordinator Office in Egypt, Global Environmental Facilities, Egyptian Ministry of Environment and Egyptian Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.

In these programs, SDSP gives the lead to university students to present possible scenarios to achieve the SDGs. Students claimed that a good education system able to create a creative person and to develop talents and skills is essential to achieve SDGs. They also emphasized that, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation among youth, raising awareness on environmental challenges, and investing in human resources are among the main sustainability drivers. Through our programs, they were able to have hands experiences and to put into practice SD concepts. Visiting rural areas, natural protectorate, interacting with local communities, conducting simulations were among the main activities implemented in our programs. They were part of our special programs addressing Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification (Rio Conventions) and we gave them an opportunity to become part of the organization of the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 14), Egypt, 2018. BA research grants on SD are offered to encourage young academics to turn their ideas into real life practices and projects.

BA-Sustainability leadership programs faced three main challenges. One is the lack of interest among some students who perceive these activities as extra- curricular ones that create pressure on their academic and study schedules. Reluctance to commit to such programs among some academic circles. As a non-profit organization, there are always the challenges of financial resources and raising funds to ensure the sustainability of these programs where we capitalize on the BA vast networks of collaborations with many international, regional and national entities to overcome it.

At BA, we believe that higher education institutions play a vital role to promote sustainable development. Developing leaderships towards SD, integrating SD concepts and practices within in the higher education system as well as empowering university students should be a top priority for each and every higher education institution and those supporting higher education.

27 Is striving for excellence in HEIs incompatible with partnership practices? Leadership principles for the Future We Want
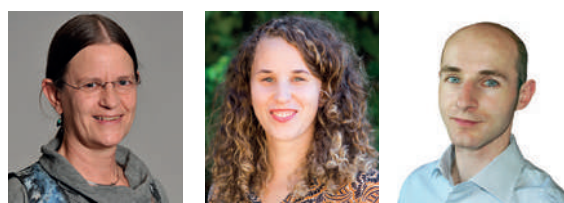
by **Anne Zimmermann**, *COPERNICUS Alliance President, CDE, Univ. of Bern, Switzerland*, **Ingrid Mulà**, *COPERNICUS Alliance Executive Director, Institute of Educational Research, Univ. of*

Girona, Spain, **Mario Diethart***, COPERNICUS Alliance Network Manager, RCE Graz-Styria, Univ. of Graz, Austria*

Partnerships for sustainable development have rightly been defined by the global community as key to achieving the SDGs. In higher education, however, the partnership ideal is rather difficult to pursue because of higher education institutions' commitment to competitiveness: pursuit of excellence is (mis)understood as pursuit of *individual* excellence only – either in the sense of a single individual's or an individual team's or institution's achievement – and supported by funding structures and rankings that increase the commodification of science and education (Sterling 2021). This leaves higher education institutions (HEIs) no chance to pay the partnership ideal more than lip service: if they want to be the best, they need to beat all others in a race towards acknowledgement based on criteria that celebrate metrics; this is hardly compatible with the partnership ideal. Moreover, HEIs in the global South are always disadvantaged in this race for the top. In this position paper, we argue that an escape from this lock-in situation is possible by 1) developing a less competitive and individualistic understanding of excellence, 2) adopting collaborative networking practices, and 3) embracing academic leadership processes and practices that keep sustainable development as their guiding principle.

First, let us consider what "excellence" usually means in higher education and how it needs to be redefined for higher education for sustainable development (HESD). Defining it mainly in terms of countable *material* items, (e.g. number of peer-reviewed papers in high-impact factor journals), is problematic, because this prioritizes disciplinarity and an understanding of science usually based on the disengaged paradigm of science-to-market and the fact/value split. Such metrics also deny the fact that sustainability requires a fundamentally systemic approach, a (largely immaterial) value and equitability orientation, and an action-orientation. Another issue is that this conventional understanding is usually linked to competitiveness for greater *market and employment* value only, disregarding the need for partnership as a value. All of these negated elements – a *systemic* approach, *value-oriented and engaged* science that includes interaction with *practitioners*, and a *collaborative attitude* with a range of different partners – must be at the core of the understanding of excellence in HESD. An additional factor to be taken into account in the understanding of "excellence" is that sustainability is a globally desired goal that requires *transformative learning* (UNESCO 2021) and societal transformation. Once adopted at a larger (and structural) scale, this radically different understanding of excellence will enable HEIs to overcome the lock-in of competitiveness and

> ❝ **Sustainability is a globally desired goal that requires transformative learning (UNESCO 2021) and societal transformation.** ❞

at the same time strive for excellence towards sustainable development with a partnership approach.

Second, we need more collaborative networking practices with corresponding funding options within the higher education context (Dlouhá *et al.* 2018). The COPERNICUS Alliance, a European network of HEIs committed to transformative learning and change for sustainable development, has been instrumental in exploring and putting in practice networking and sustainability principles in the past ten years (CA 2012). Its annual conferences and common projects have led to new practices of co-creation and joint learning, and to a search for methods to support collaborative action in order to increase the reach and quality of HESD.

As a third point in this paper, we suggest processes and principles that arguably have the power to help HEIs overcome the lock-in of competitiveness without forfeiting their ambition to strive for excellence. As underlined by Sterling (2021), progress towards integration of sustainability in HEIs is now visible – but still not sufficient given the urgency of the crisis humanity and the environment are facing. Sterling distinguishes between different degrees of integrating sustainability, including the partnership principle: (1) no response, (2) accommodation, (3) reform, and (4) transformation. His message is that we have to reach degree four as rapidly as possible, but he also argues that approaches two and three are important and relevant. Indeed, we cannot expect the whole higher education sector to change immediately. Which options do we have to move forward?

Geoff Scott (2019) proposes sharpening the following skills among students and future leaders: First listen, then link, then leverage, then lead – in this order. This sequence can also be applied very effectively when supporting an HEI on its path towards greater integration of sustainability: Faculties and faculty members who do not (yet) agree that sustainable development is everyone's concern are more likely to become committed if they feel listened to, if someone then shows them links between what they do and sustainability, and then leverages and helps lead their efforts. The kind of leadership needed for such support has been described through numerous metaphors, for example "servant leadership". As Marilyn Mehlmann argues: "Leadership is needed to inspire, to create focus, to foster discovery and creativity, to align intentions, to keep moving, to keep faith with visions and values. It takes some highly skilled navigation to steer between extremes; to inspire without dominating, to create focus without manipulation, to foster discovery and creativity without losing focus, to align intentions without becoming deaf to inconveniently divergent views, to keep moving at a pace that suits those most affected" (Mehlmann, unpubl.). These are the skills we urgently need to hone in order to enable our HEIs to engage in true partnerships for the SDGs.

28 Higher education taking the lead on environmental sustainability

by **Michael Gaebel**, *Director, Higher Education Policy Unit* & **Henriette Stoeber**, *Policy Analyst, European University Association*

As 2030 is coming closer, and the effects and impact of our carbon-intensive lifestyle become more tangible, the need for faster transformation of technologies, economies and societies is evident. Universities can and should play a major role in this transformation process. Many higher education institutions have already announced to put their education, research, innovation and third missions into the service of achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The European University Association's (EUA) vision for 2030 (1) predicts that "Sustainable development will be the main framework for driving impact through university missions, as universities proactively reflect upon, find and promote solutions in dialogue with society."

What has to happen to ensure that the university sector can fully assume this role, and render full impact? A recent survey (2) conducted by the European University Association (EUA) provides some evidence on the specific example of environmental sustainability. The first ever survey on this topic (greening) conducted across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), with results from more than 300 institutions in 43 higher education systems, confirms the crucial and manifold role that higher education institutions can play in developing and mainstreaming sustainable development. Most institutions address environmental sustainability across their missions and are actively involved in a wider range of forward-thinking activities – both to green their own footprint, and to contribute to society. But results also confirm the need for more institution-wide approaches, and for external support, in terms of policies and funding, but also acknowledgement and awareness raising. A few of the findings may illustrate this:

Three quarters of institutions indicate to have dedicated **strategies** in place, or plan develop them in the near future. Usually going beyond environmental sustainability, strategies are more likely to be framed by the SDGs.

Notably, three out of five institutions consider **SDGs in curriculum reform**, and more than half offer modules dedicated to specific aspects of the SDGs to all or most students. This is

> **The vast majority of institutions perceives their engagement as central to their institutional values, driven by their third mission, as well as by the engagement of their students, staff, leadership and wider community.**

crucial, given that transformations will have to rely on a range of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, including sciences, engineering, and humanities.

The vast majority of institutions perceives their engagement as **central to their institutional values**, driven by their third mission, as well as by the engagement of their students, staff, leadership and wider community. Many of the frequently cited examples in the EUA survey emphasise the institutions' role as actors in society, with around half being active in community engagement and outreach, as well as contributing to local or national initiatives and policy debates in the field. Most institutions emphasise the crucial importance of their leadership's engagement and support, of partnership and collaboration with student groups, and with other institutions.

The majority of institutions has **concrete policies** in place to foster environmental sustainability – ranging from minimizing the use of resources and recycling, to the provision of digital tools for teleworking, as well as numerous dedicated research and innovation activities. Self-regulation, but also incentives and encouragement contribute to change and transformation; for example, half of the institutions encourage low carbon forms of transportation for student mobility. More than half encourage or incentivise virtual student and staff mobility, as a replacement for physical exchanges, and another quarter offers it as a standard.

While the majority of institutional strategies include targets and goals, indicators to monitor success in addressing environmental sustainability – and especially SDGs more broadly – are not always easy to define. Among the most tangible **impacts** which have been reported are improvements of quality of campus life, stimulation of dedicated research, and enhancement of learning and teaching. Generally, ambitions and expectations tend to be high, and quite confident: many institutions strive to lead through example, and to contribute to environmental and societal change. But they also want to become more attractive to current and future staff and students.

In order to **realise the full potential** for environmental sustainability, the majority of institutions call for enhanced funding, both from the system, as well as the European level. Peer learning and exchange with other institutions on this topic would be especially welcome, and a third would see benefit in a dedicated European initiative to enhance, promote and connect their initiatives more widely. The forthcoming Council

Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability (3) might provide the basis for such European support.

Survey data suggests that many universities already provide the research, knowledge, education and skills required for a green transition that has to go far beyond green technologies. Higher education institutions provide major resources to this, in terms of interdisciplinary knowledge and innovation, but also the skills and mindset that are needed. Given their expertise, engagement and enthusiasm, they can be a driver for change and innovation required for achieving the goals of the Agenda 2030 and the European Union's Green Deal. Europe has to capitalise on this, in policy making, communication and implementation – in Europe, and globally, through dialogue and collaboration with international partners.

29 What universities can do to mainstream sustainable development

by **Patrick Blessinger***, Adjunct Associate Professor, St. John's University, USA; Executive Director, HETL Association, USA, and* **Barbara Cozza***, Full Professor, School of Education, Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership, St. John's University, USA.*

By and large, human beliefs, attitudes and mindsets drive human behaviours. Thus, the future of humanity, and the planet they inhabit, will ultimately depend on humanity's ability to adopt a sustainability mindset in order to solve the most intractable issues of our time (for example, poverty, illiteracy, species extinction, resource depletion, climate change). Within this context, higher education, as a catalyst for economic and social progress, can and should lead the world to achieve a sustainable future with the support of the UN framework Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals.

Ultimately, the solutions to create a sustainable world depend on our ability to change our mindset about our relationship to the planet and to each other. When the mindset changes, the behaviour follows. So, how can higher education institutions move from the margins of leadership for sustainable development (SD) and begin taking a leading role to mainstream SD in society?

Engage in Transformative Leadership

The scientific data on climate change is comprehensive and unequivocal. Thus, now is the time to move beyond aspirations and platitudes and move towards bold actions to achieve the SD goals. First, institutional leaders can demonstrate their commitment to SD by integrating SD into their mission, vision, and values statements as well as implementing concrete SD policies, plans, and practices; that is, putting words into concrete, measurable actions. Institutions that are fully engaged in implementing SD initiatives will serve as exemplars in transformative leadership.

Institutional leaders are in the best position to influence the mindsets of their stakeholders (that is, students, faculty, administration, community). As such, institutional leaders have a fiduciary and ethical responsibility to take decisive action to mainstream SD locally and, concomitantly, around the world. Since higher education is a global system, when institutional leaders decide to implement institutional SD initiatives, their collective actions will also lead to positive global outcomes.

Collaborate on Strategic Planning

One of the major challenges facing higher education institutions is how best to implement various SD initiatives within different political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological contexts, rather than a one-size-fits all plan. This is especially true in a contemporary world with higher education institutions of varying missions, sizes, and resources. Thus, in order to mitigate the risks associated with implementing a SD plan, institutions should engage all stakeholders in the strategic planning process and conduct the research necessary to make informed, data-driven decisions that are best suited for their particular context.

Within the context of the institution's mission, vision, and values, the high-level strategic planning process involves clearly defined strategic goals, objectives, timelines, and budgets. The strategic goals and objectives should be translated into lower-level operational goals and objectives in order to be properly implemented. The work required to implement a SD plan is carried out by committees who have clear roles, responsibilities, and reporting structures. Processes, procedures, and systems are put in place to ensure progress towards all goals and objectives. Data from institutional assessment and project evaluation activities is gathered to determine the effectiveness of the planning process for a full cycle review. For example, Harvard University's sustainability plan (1) illustrates one way to encapsulate these planning elements.

Implement Sustainability Locally

To start, institutional leaders need to recognize their role and relationship with their environment. For instance, the natural environment cannot speak for itself and cannot act collectively

> 66 **The future of humanity, and the planet they inhabit, will ultimately depend on humanity's ability to adopt a sustainability mindset in order to solve the most intractable issues of our time.** 99

on its own behalf. It follows, therefore, that humanity must be the voice for and the conscience of the environment. Environmental rights (2) are not only an extension of human rights to the environment (anthropocentric view) but they also comprise humanity's ethical duty to preserve, protect, and improve the environment (ecocentric view) because we are the only species capable of doing so and because it is in our best long-term survival interest to do so. Thus, higher education leaders, as thought leaders, are uniquely positioned to give voice to the serious problems plaguing humanity.

To effectively solve these global problems, leaders must speak from a position of authenticity and action. These qualities can be demonstrated by implementing a bold SD strategic plan. For example, Princeton University (3) has developed a comprehensive SD plan with bold targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Their plan permeates every aspect of university life and it engages every stakeholder, from teaching to research to service. Their aim is to develop scientifically measurable metrics and innovative best practices that can be scaled from the individual to the institution to the local community to the world.

Mainstream Sustainable Development Globally

All institutions can be guided by core sustainability values such as, 1) ensure a fair and just society and economy for present and future generations, 2) ensure the protection of human, animal, and environmental rights, and 3) improve the quality of life for all on planet Earth. These core SD values not only form the basis for the SD mindset, but they help to harmonize SD activities around the world and inspire the current and future generation of higher education leaders to take bold action to achieve the sustainable development goals.

30 Fundamental Values as a Foundation for Sustainable Leadership

by **David Lock**, *Secretary-General of the Magna Charta Observatory, Bologna, Italy, and* **Patrick Deane**, *Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University at Kingston, Canada, and President of the Magna Charta Observatory.*

"Universities acknowledge that they have a responsibility to engage with and respond to the aspirations and challenges of the world and to the communities they serve, to benefit humanity and contribute to sustainability."

With these words, the *Magna Charta Universitatum (MCU) 2020* takes note of a decisive shift in the mission of universities that has occurred since the start of the new millennium. Although highly significant, the shift is however not radical: that "the future of mankind depends largely on cultural, scientific and technical development" was after all a first consideration in the original *Magna Charta Universitatum* of 1988. But to say now that universities have a responsibility to actively engage with global challenges, to benefit humanity and advance sustainability, is to go much further. In the language of the *MCU 2020* we hear not confidence in the timeless and apparently detached authority of the academy, but instead a sense of urgency, anxiety about the state of the world, and an acute awareness of the moral obligations that rest upon scholars everywhere.

Have universities carried such responsibility before? Some may have done, but not with the mainstream urgency that the greater number of their more varied stakeholders expect today. Also, only in an information age can institutions devoted to learning, discovery, and the global dissemination of knowledge expect to exert anything like a direct influence on society and on the future of the planet. Persisting, intractable disparities in wealth and wellbeing around the globe, as well as the accelerating degradation of the environment: such massive challenges one might say cannot help but make activists of all of us, along with the institutions to which we devote ourselves.

The very notion of an activist university is contested in some quarters, and there is certainly force to the argument that a doctrinaire university is a contradiction in terms. Indeed, MCU2020 uncompromisingly declares that "universities question dogmas and established doctrines and encourage critical thinking in all students and scholars." Our point, though, is that the global situation—in which poverty, suffering, inequity and environmental catastrophe is ubiquitous—is fact rather than doctrine, and that when universities position themselves to lead in the cause of sustainable development they are fulfilling rather than compromising their essential mission. If universities align themselves with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it does not follow that the principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom are somehow in jeopardy.

At the institutional level, at least. A university can provide global leadership on SDG 4 (Quality Education) or SDG 13 (Climate Action), say, and still be in full compliance with the Fundamental Principles laid out in the original *Magna Charta Universitatum*. But for the individual who is charged with leadership of that university, nothing can be taken for granted. The effectiveness of the institution—its capacity to have real and meaningful impact in any chosen area—requires it to live according to academic values without compromise: to ensure that its research and teaching are morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power, that teaching and research are inseparable, that freedom in research and training is scrupulously observed, and that all work is undertaken "ethically and with integrity, producing reliable, trustworthy and accessible results"

> **Academic leadership for sustainable development is therefore what academic leadership ever was: the enormously complex and nuanced business of balancing freedom with discipline, the rights of individuals with the needs of the whole, respect for what has been achieved with the restless desire to surpass it, and the promptings of curiosity and creativity with the needs of the contingent world.**

(MCU 2020). That is how universities can uniquely serve society and enable a sustainable future.

Academic leadership for sustainable development is therefore what academic leadership ever was: the enormously complex and nuanced business of balancing freedom with discipline, the rights of individuals with the needs of the whole, respect for what has been achieved with the restless desire to surpass it, and the promptings of curiosity and creativity with the needs of the contingent world. That always took skill, wider environmental social and political awareness and personal strength, but today, with the global stakes and the opportunity for universities to have impact so high, it will also require a strategic focus, special resolve and unprecedented courage.

By demonstrating this, universities will indeed be showing their commitment to the original Magna Charta and to upholding and advancing the principles, values and responsibilities set out in the MCU 2020, to strengthening the role of universities in the preservation of the planet and promoting health, prosperity, and enlightenment around the world.

31 Transformative Partnerships: UNICA and SDGs Working Group

by **Matthew Lawson**, *University of Edinburgh, Coordinator of the UNICA Green and SDGs Working Group*

Addressing the climate crisis and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are key challenges governments, businesses and society in the twenty first century are facing. Partnerships across sectors will be fundamental to achieving a just transition to a low carbon society.

Universities are in a unique position to support society to make this transition, through their capacity to develop and share knowledge, skills and research. Universities are also key in equipping the next generation of leaders to have the knowledge, skills and values needed to address current and future global challenges.

Due to their position, universities have a real opportunity to develop the effectiveness of current and future partnerships, improving how educational institutions and different sectors work together, accelerating actions to address the climate crisis and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Universities from across Europe are increasingly working together to share experience and collaborate on mainstreaming sustainable development issues across learning and teaching, academic research, operations, governance and partnerships. With the eventual aim to implement good practice and to drive positive environmental and societal change.

The Network of Universities from Capital Cities (UNICA) brings together 54 universities from 38 capital cities of Europe, seeking to facilitate international collaborations and promote academic leadership through understanding and sharing practices between universities throughout Europe. UNICA has several working groups, encouraging partnership working between universities, this includes the UNICA Green and Sustainable Development Goals Working Group.

This working group is the platform that focuses on the climate crisis, sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group was established in 2011, an initiative of the participants of the UNICA Student Conference 2010 in Rome, under the name UNICA Green Academic Footprint.

Initially, the platform focused mainly on the discussion and exchange of practices related to the implementation of environmental sustainability strategies at universities. Recently, the group started to widen its activities to meet the holistic concept of sustainability conceived by the Sustainable Development Goals.

The activities of the working group include sharing experience and collaborating on mainstreaming sustainable development issues across learning and teaching, academic research, operations, governance and partnerships.

The working group has hosted webinars to enable universities to share and learn from each other. Webinars have focused on issues such as leadership to support mainstreaming sustainable development in universities, adopting whole institution approaches to social and civic responsibility, as well as reaching climate neutrality targets and finding solutions. Each webinar included expert speakers, with their own set of unique

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experiences in working on these issues, as well as sharing common opportunities and challenges. These webinars have enabled universities to identify and replicate good practice.

Members of the UNICA Green and Sustainable Development Goals Working Group are demonstrating leadership for a sustainable future across a range of areas, for example:

King's College London was ranked as one of the top universities in the world in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, which assess the contribution of universities against the Sustainable Development Goals. Freie Universität Berlin was the first university in Germany to commit to a climate neutrality target by 2025. The University of Edinburgh is leading universities in the UK on social investments, committing up to £8 million for social investments through its Social Enterprise and Social Investment Strategy. The University of Copenhagen is leading work to develop frameworks to convert inspiring ideas and innovation into the implementation of new sustainable solutions on campus, using the campus as a Living Lab.

Universities who are members of UNICA are also looking to further share their experiences with other international partners, taking proactive roles in global networks, such as the Climate Alliance, International Sustainable Campus Network, UNA Europa, the University Alliance for Sustainability, the U7 + Alliance and the IAU.

In the immediate future, the UNICA Green and Sustainable Development Goals Working Group will be looking to support universities to learn and share experiences on climate action, governance and delivering impact through academic research and providing opportunities for student learning.

By working together and sharing unique and common experience, universities can work together through partnerships and networks to transform their own practices by mainstreaming sustainable development issues across learning and teaching, academic research, operations, governance and partnerships, driving positive environmental and societal change, and supporting a just transition to a low carbon society.

32 SocialErasmus – Education for sustainable development through community engagement initiatives

by **Juan Rayon Gonzalez**, *President, Erasmus Student Network (ESN)*

The value of learning mobility is widely recognised, both within and outside the Higher Education sector. In Europe, political representatives normally praise the importance of the European Union (EU)'s educational programme, Erasmus+, as one of the biggest achievements in the history of the EU. Almost nobody would deny that these experiences are extremely beneficial for the students who take part in them, and not only from an academic perspective. Personal development, increased adaptability and creation of networks are just some of the gains that students make when they go abroad.

For more than 3 decades, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), Europe's biggest international student organisation, has been working towards one mission – the enrichment of society through international students. We believe that the existence of mobility programmes that allow students to move seamlessly and spend parts of their educational pathways abroad can, and should, benefit society at large.

How does this process work? I will highlight two key elements that we consider fundamental to maximise this benefit.

First, mobilities should be impactful. Going abroad is a transformative experience that creates the perfect window of opportunity to go beyond the normal academic content and discuss different societal challenges, connecting them with local realities. When planning an international experience, and especially an exchange, this should be taken into account.

Second, mobile students should be in constant direct contact with local communities. It would be a huge mistake to assume that this happens by default. Our research project ESN Survey found in 2016 (1) that most mobile students struggle to meet as many locals as they would like to, and they do not always interact enough with local communities. Both international and local students express that they do not meet each other.

For more than 10 years, Erasmus Student Network has been implementing SocialErasmus, our key initiative to foster volunteering and community engagement on exchange. Under this initiative, local ESN associations partner up with local stakeholders like NGOs or schools to organise activities with international students and local communities, fostering intercultural understanding and internationalisation at home.

Through the SocialErasmus project [2], we have developed a comprehensive toolkit with materials for Higher Education Institutions, policy makers and local schools. We now have a range of tools that can facilitate the organisation of activities and recognition of learning outcomes by universities, and our plan is to use the next few years to make this practice more common in Universities across Europe.

Volunteering during exchange periods abroad brings the opportunity to educate students about global challenges while addressing the needs of local communities. This is a very practical example of the "think global, act local" motto. In the last few years, ESN has been trying to directly connect our community engagement activities with the Sustainable

> With physical mobility gradually restarting, this year will bring a great opportunity to continue upscaling our contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals through community engagement. In this way, ESN is leading for SD and also empowering students to take the lead.

Development Goals, as the key framework to involve all societal actors in the improvement of our world. In order to achieve this goal, we have bet on a threefold strategy – capacity building, partnerships and social impact measurement.

Capacity building for volunteers and international students is fundamental. We have started to create internal materials to train our volunteers about the contribution that our organisation can make to the SDGs, and to include training sessions related to them.

Partnerships are fundamental to ensure a meaningful contribution to local communities in line with the SDGs. Instead of organising the community engagement activities completely in isolation, ESN always tries to identify local partners with expertise in the field. Local ESN organisations act as bridges between international students and local stakeholders, thus enabling both the meaningful impact to society and the development of key competences by the students.

Impact measurement is the 'cherry on top of the pie', and the fundamental part of the process to understand whether we are moving in the right direction and if we are achieving the desired goals. Our recently developed platform "activities. esn.org" allows our volunteers to register all the community engagement activities that they do, adding qualitative and quantitative data about them. When doing the reporting, the volunteers are asked about the learning goals of the activity and the final results, the impact on the international students, and the collaboration with local students and stakeholders, among other things. Once they have submitted this information, the platform highlights which concrete SDGs are being targeted through the activities.

With physical mobility gradually restarting, this year will bring a great opportunity to continue upscaling our contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals through community engagement. In this way, ESN is leading for SD and also empowering students to take the lead. The transformative potential of learning mobility is huge, and we are committed to put it at the service of a more sustainable and fairer planet. No contribution is too small!

33 The Role of student participation and dynamics of a Student Association at a moment to reshape education for good

by **Jacob Blasius**, *Chairperson, SOS International, Denmark*

These are strange times to be a student. Universities are no longer a physical place, and the world we learn about must be transformed for the sake of our planet's future. After the pandemic, we will return to the physical lecture hall, but the sustainable and fair transformation is still to be seen.

Student life will return, and that with incredible energy and tenacity. We must, however not return to the same habits. We cannot return to the same, as the world is forever changed for better and for worse. We are seeing the end of a health crisis but coming ever closer to a climate catastrophe.

Students are worried about their future. They are worried about whether their education will prepare them for the challenges there are to come. They are worried that their education is too disconnected from the world (Students Organizing for Sustainability International, 2020). We must address this because they are worried and for a good reason.

I propose that we meet this challenge by using this moment and the incredible drive of students to reshape education. We, students of higher education, often feel patronized. We are on the footstep of the world but within enormous factories of learning. This characterization of educational institutions might seem unnecessarily polemical, but from a student perspective, it is not as odd as it might seem. Too often, education becomes about the consumption of knowledge and not about education as a transformative process for teachers, students, and the world around them.

We thus have the potential to make higher education more human, accessible, and connected to the world outside the walls of the auditoriums.

We cannot deny that it is our responsibility to find the sustainable solutions our world so desperately needs. We must make the content of our curriculums sustainability oriented

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while not forgetting to make our institutions sustainable themselves. I do believe this is neither possible nor wise to do without students. Sustainability must be lived; not just talked or read about. This approach to education is not easy. We must not believe that it can be done overnight. It is, however, necessary. The first step is for students and academics to join forces and learn to navigate in a more dialogic form of learning, as opposed to the one that has been prominent since the first university was established; one of passive learners disconnected from the world. Students and academics must become active and connected to the world. Not each one alone, but by making our democratic structures relevant and impactful. We must rejuvenate the student movement and use our joint eagerness to build back better.

It is time for a change, and now is the moment it can happen.

34 A Future Fashioned by Fact

by **Ramu Damodaran**, *first Chief of the United Nations Academic Impact*

In his report "Our Common Agenda," issued in September 2021, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres proposed convening a "summit of the future" which would "forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like and how we can secure it." A compelling idea, one that brought to mind the gender unneutral remarks of UNESCO Director-General Jaime Torres Bodet in 1950 about "the man of action wishing to base his decisions not merely on his appreciation of the future but on the lessons of both the present and the past," an appreciation that informed his call three years earlier, when he was Minister of Education in Mexico, to create what was to emerge as the International Association of Universities (IAU).

The idea of securing the "then" in the explorations of the "now" is inherent in the very preamble of the Charter of the United Nations and its possibly most cited reference, that of the present tense of "saving" the future tense "succeeding generations" from the scourge of war. It was an idea comprehended also in the very first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly that sought to address "the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy." And it was an idea affirmed in the Charter's provision that the "Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters and may make recommendations with respect to any such matters..."

Inherent in the last was the distinction between the academic integrity of studies (which could be made or initiated) and the source for recommendations pursuant to them which would not be the studies themselves but the legislative body that

> ❝ What now remains is to move human action from the laboratory of the university to the laboratory of national and global change. ❞

requested them. There is also one point in this article of note, that the matters required to be "international" in character. What did dramatically happen in 2015 was the transformation of the national to the international, where issues earlier regarded as within the province of domestic development and internal affair were accepted as a collective global responsibility by all 193 UN Member States, through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Universities and other academic institutions were quick to see their own capacities and, indeed, responsibilities in working to their realization. What now remains is to move human action (to paraphrase Bodet) from the laboratory of the university to the laboratory of national and global change. This will need to diminish the diffidence with which the United Nations has regarded academic institutions and, in so doing, address five key elements.

One, assure scholarship its right to investigate, inquire and inform, not to instigate or insist. Facts and forecasts are the most difficult to establish and, once they are, the responsibility of drawing necessary corrective action lies elsewhere. We have an excellent model, a third of a century old, in the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which is careful to provide an objective basis upon which policy can be made, rather than defining the policy itself.

Two, establish direct linkages between communities of scholarship and action empowered areas of the UN. Secretary-General Guterres's proposal to repurpose the Trusteeship Council to "create an intergovernmental body for inter- generational issues" offers one possible model; could we think of panels, constituted by scholars, on the lines of the IPCC for each of the other 16 SDGs whose informed conclusions would be the source for informed political and diplomatic action?

Three, create viable linkages between the practical work and innovation by universities within their own communities and the UN offices in their countries. The introduction of the UN Resident Coordinator system has assured an integrated UN presence in a vast number of countries. These offices can transmit details of successful research projects to the UN agencies most relevant to their adaptation and propagation, and possible international acknowledgment; to mould the old adage, thinking locally and acting globally.

Four, harness the enormous imaginative and creative potential of the student community. The United Nations Academic Impact ASPIRE programme offers a model (however laboured its acronymous expansion to "Action by Students to Promote Innovation and Research through Education"), but universal, formalized structures are by no means necessary as long as

institutions encourage, and give the luxury of time, to students to select and to sustain a specific cause.

Five, address what Pam Fredman, IAU President, describes as "ever-greater decoupling of research and teaching" by enhancing the attraction of research by its global good dimension. Just as the power of cause animates members of civil society organizations, so too should the power of cause energise research, research, in the phrase of the editors of "*The Promise of Higher Education: Essays in Honour of 70 Years of IAU*" that revisits the past, analyses the present and looks into the future. Taking us back to where this short essay began, to the 'inter-generationality' of time and thought.

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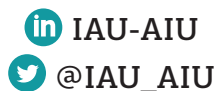
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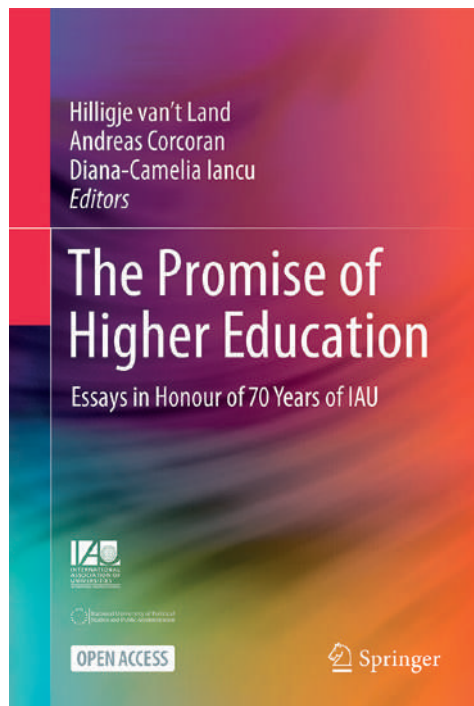**Students Organizing for Sustainability International.** (2020). *Students, Sustainability and Education*. Retrieved from https://sos.earth/survey-2020/

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