Higher Education and the SDGs: Global networks and targeted partnerships in practice

IAU at 2nd GUNi Conference on the SDGs - HE & Science take action

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Secretary-general
International Association of Universities (IAU)
IAU-The International Association of Universities

Building a Worldwide Higher Education Community

• Founded 1950 by UNESCO

• Non-Governmental Organization

• Based at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris

• Members: >650 universities and 31 Associations from 120 countries, outreach 20,000 U’s and HEIs

• Strategic Priorities:
  • Internationalization
  • Leadership
  • Technology
  • Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD), since 1993
Higher Education for Sustainable Development (HESD)

IAU ABC-Strategy

• Advocacy & Analyses
  • Global Survey Reports on HESD (2016 and 2019)

• Building synergies & networking
  • IAU HESD Cluster with 16 strong University leads
  • Key partner of the UNESCO GAP on ESD, SDSN, HESI, UVED, SOS global (student unions)…

• Communicating & convening
  • Global portal on HESD - www.iau-hesd.net
  • Publications, in particular on the SDGs
Role(s) of universities in society

Based on the principle that knowledge and education should be global common goods, universities are to:

- Teach and educate citizens and future leaders
- Undertake responsible research
- Foster community engagement and solidarity
- Develop strategic partnerships with civil society, the private sector, local authorities, decision makers and other universities and HEIs
Tensions calling for constant re-definition of the role of HE


i. Global vs local

ii. Universal vs Particular

iii. Tradition vs modernity

iv. Spiritual vs material

v. Long-term vs short-term

vi. Competition vs equality

vii. Expansion of knowledge vs ability to assimilate such knowledge
New tensions since

- Economic growth and rising vulnerability
- Growing inequality
- Increased ecological stress
- Rising intolerance and violence; wars
- National identity vs emergence of transnational forms of citizenship
- Massification
- Commodification of HE
- Demand for professional qualifications while maintaining key role higher education in training for research and through research
The paradigm shift calls for thinking in terms of shared responsibility for a shared future.
IAU Global Cluster on HESD
The Global Cluster on SDG3

as a concrete example bringing together 7 universities from 7 countries and 5 continents to work on SDG3

Nadja Gmelch
Director Open Knowledge Projects, UOC
Global Cluster on SDG3
Win-Win Situation: HE & SDGs

SDGs influence Universities to:
- Create new research areas
- Increase funding possibilities
- Create common frameworks
- Help defining responsibility
- Request information
- Be part of Science-Policy Interface

Universities engage with SDGs to:
- Provide knowledge
- Educate future generations
- Work on local level
- Engage local communities
- Translate SDGs into action
- Engage critically with SDGs
- Be part of Science-Policy Interface

Knowledge
Collaboration
Exchange
Learning
Results of 2\textsuperscript{nd} Global Survey on HESD

Location of Respondents (n=536)
Understanding of Agenda 2030 (0=nothing; 3=very knowledgeable)
Main understanding of sustainable development at HEIs
Influence of SDGs

Do you think that the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 increased the interest in sustainable development at your institution?

- Yes, 64%
- No, 15%
- I don't know, 21%

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES
Areas of engagement with SDGs

- Education & Teaching
- Research
- Community Engagement
- Campus Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Education &amp; Teaching</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Community Engagement</th>
<th>Campus Operations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>60.49%</td>
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<td>Africa</td>
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<td>North America</td>
<td>48.78%</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
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</tbody>
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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES
Working areas SDGs: Education and Teaching
Cooperation with other HEIs
HE key stakeholder to realize the SDGs and foster a sustainable society: *some of the Obstacles*

Earmarked funding, excessive demand on results, questioning of knowledge, …
   To academic freedom

Stakeholder (funding source) influence/demands, commodification, …
   To institutional autonomy

Separate funding, commodification (employability), …
   To the fact that research and education are inseparable

Demand on “service for the local”, no global connect
   To social responsibility
More information:  [www.iau-aiu.net](http://www.iau-aiu.net)  
[www.iau-hesd.net](http://www.iau-hesd.net)

- IAU 5th global Survey Report on the Internationalisation of Higher Education
- IAU 2\textsuperscript{nd} Global Survey Report on HESD
- IAU global Survey Report on the impact of technology on HE
- IAU \textit{Aiming Higher}, the IAU series on higher education, produced with IAU Member institutions and BBC StoryWorks: [www.iau-aiminghigher.org](http://www.iau-aiminghigher.org).
Thank you!

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