Contents

Introduction

November 19th
Posters

WORKSHOP 1
Humanities beyond higher education

WORKSHOP 2
Education from a humanistic approach: teaching for the future

WORKSHOP 3
Research and impact: bridging the gap in diverse knowledge fields

November 20th

WORKSHOP 4
Gender and equality: interdisciplinary approaches to gender

WORKSHOP 5
Sustainability and ethics: higher education contributing to the world’s challenges

WORKSHOP 6
Humanities towards a more equitable, responsible and democratic society

Higher Education in the World Report 7

OPEN CALL
Introduction

The 2018 GUNi International Conference was convened in Barcelona for November 19-20 by the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi). The event brought together over 160 attendees from 22 different countries for two days of workshops, keynotes and panel discussions on the topic of Humanities and Higher Education: Generating Synergies between Science, Technology and Humanities. The Conference was held at the CosmoCaixa Science Museum.

During the event, participants and speakers debated the role and future of humanities and the much-needed interrelations and dialogues between science, technology and humanities in light of current trends and global issues. Stakeholders from around the world gathered in Barcelona to exchange knowledge, ideas, experiences and expectations about the current challenges that societies and higher education institutions are facing and how we should tackle those challenges from a transversal perspective.

With this Conference, GUNi aimed to explore what is currently happening in and between different institutions in terms of successful experiences and innovations in integrating science, technology and humanities, and to open a worldwide debate on the role humanities should play in higher education institutions to offer a pertinent response to the challenges faced by the world in the 21st century.

The organizers would like to thank all those who attended and contributed to the Conference. We look forward to continuing our partnerships and working together to strengthen higher education around the world.

Why did GUNi choose the topic of Humanities, Science and Technology?

GUNi is an international network created in 1999 after UNESCO’s World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE 1998) to ensure and facilitate continued implementation of its main decisions. GUNi is supported by UNESCO and the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP), which holds its Secretariat.

GUNi currently has more than 220 members from 78 countries, including the UNESCO Chairs in Higher Education, higher education institutions, research centers and networks related to innovation and the social commitment of higher education.

GUNi’s headquarters are located in Barcelona and it has regional offices in Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, Asia & the Pacific and the Arab States.

Mission:

GUNi’s mission is to strengthen the visions, missions and policies of higher education across the world from the perspective of public service, relevance and social responsibility.

Objectives:

1. To encourage Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to reorient their roles in order to broaden their social value and contributions and strengthen their critical stance within society.

2. To promote the exchange of resources, innovative ideas and experiences, while allowing for collective reflection and co-production of knowledge on emerging higher education issues, innovation, social responsibility and relevance on a global scale.

3. To promote North-South and South-South relations and cooperation between Higher Education Institutions.

4. To contribute to and reflect on the role of higher education and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs for a better and more sustainable future.

5. To reconcile higher education’s social function or “third mission”, ensuring that it is giving back to society, with its efforts to place high in existing rankings.

6. To establish constant contact and dialogue with the environment, making a fundamental contribution to the knowledge society.
Vision:

GUNi aims to be a global benchmark for the co-creation of knowledge on emerging issues in higher education from different cultural perspectives and to establish itself as a cohesive, active and stable network.

GUNi’s values are collaboration, knowledge and training, gender equality, social responsibility, creativity and excellence.

GUNi strives to be at the forefront in the identification of emerging issues in higher education and in society and to lead debate in order to provide stakeholders with relevant information and policy recommendations to deal with them, while always considering different viewpoints and gender and geographical balance.

In this regard, we sense an increasing concern for the perception of the usefulness of Humanities in modern society, especially in higher education systems, which condition their future. In recent times, this has led to debates, publications and reports in different countries in our cultural sphere. This concern has often led to positions that move between two extremes: the catastrophic and protectionist views. We are either told about what is being lost and warned of the ethical, social and cultural consequences, or about the different measures being proposed to conserve and preserve the institutional and academic space that, from the epistemological division of knowledge, we have traditionally understood to be Humanities. At the same time, we are witnessing profound changes to our present world that have clear implications for the future, whereby we are confronted by huge challenges in terms of thinking and rethinking the meaning and value of human experience, both now and in the future. We are basically referring to three kinds of changes:

1. Those related with environmental and climatic issues, which radically question our integral relationship with the environment, in a single and shared biosphere, and that therefore have an impact on what we understand to be ‘life’,

2. Those related with current scientific and technological changes, which are mainly innovations based on new materials, robotics and artificial intelligence (and which are especially linked to social and economic relations), and big data, which include several aspects that touch close upon humanity, such as medicine and biomedicine, especially in the fields of genetics and neuroscience, health and longevity (which are also linked to social and economic relations, as well as the issue of confidentiality and data security), and which have consequences for the idea of ourselves as subjects of knowledge and action, and;

3. Those related with the cultural aspects of a global and postcolonial world, which is highly interconnected but at the same time highly fragmented and highly unequal.

These are not sectorial changes. They are major transformations that affect the very meaning of what we understand to be ‘human’ in relation to society (or societies) and the life of the planet as a whole.

From these three axes of change, we view Humanities not as a set of disciplines to be preserved or conserved, but as a set of utilitarian and applicable activities that we must continue to nurture through relevant research, with the right goals and models in keeping with these new challenges, on the good understanding that they are essential, because it is on them that the capacity to produce the meaning and value of the human experience depends in these times of change. And this needs to be done in commitment to dignity, to equality and to the reciprocity of these values.

It is from this proactive focus and in consideration of our present and the challenges of the future that we embarked upon a process of diagnosis, debate and proposals to tackle the problems with the perception, transmission and application of Humanities, and with current and short-term research in Humanities. We prioritise a problem-based focus ahead of what we might term a thematic focus, for we believe progress can only be made by dealing with unresolved problems that we assume to be common problems.

The International Conference and the 7th Higher Education in the World Report were conceived in consideration of this state of affairs. More information on the 7th edition will follow at the end of this report.
The morning featured keynotes by Arne Jarrick, professor of history at Stockholm University, and Carme Torras, research professor at the Spanish Scientific Research Council (CSIC), and head of the perception and manipulation group at the Robotics Institute in Barcelona, who each offered unique perspectives on the role of humanities.

Arne Jarrick, with his keynote titled “Knowledge resistance and other global challenges in research and education, in humanities and elsewhere” stated that the importance of humanities lies in making good decisions at the right time. He also argued that we have knowledge without knowing that we have it and that we need all students of all disciplines to be exposed to humanities. The main idea behind his keynote was that at the same time as being interested in acquiring knowledge, we are also interested in resisting it and that “Knowledge resistance is a severe problem that needs to be tackled through humanities”.

In her keynote address on “Robotics meets the humanities: some initiatives for ethics education and dissemination”, Carme Torras explained that “if technology has to model us, it is better to think what kind of technology are we developing because we develop technology without knowing what effects it will have on us – there is no time to test the effects of the ethical implications”. She also presented her novel “The Vestigial Heart”, a successful case of fiction being adapted to a course on robotics and ethics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

After the two keynotes, the session on “Global challenges that require science, technology and humanities to be integrated: implications for higher education and worldwide approaches” offered a plenary discussion featuring Josep A. Planell, president of the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi) and rector of Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Iman El Kaffass, senior advisor to the Association
Global challenges that require Science, Technology and Humanities to be integrated: Implications for Higher Education and worldwide approaches

Ahmed Sawa
University of South Africa

Marcus Knobel
University of Campinas (Brazil)

Josep A. Planell
CIPER & Open University of Catalonia

Ismar El-Khatib
Universities of Arab Countries

Josep M. Vila
Girona University Network for Innovation & AGIP
of Arab Universities (AArU), Marcelo Knobel, rector of the University of Campinas, and Ahmed Bawa, president of Universities South Africa, with Josep M. Vilalta, Director of GUNi as moderator.

Ahmed Bawa asked whether universities are able to address certain questions because of the “tyranny” of the current structure in which they are embedded. Marcelo Knobel, in turn, described the need to “create new structures to facilitate interdisciplinarity” when “everything plays against that change”. Josep A. Planell discussed the high social impact of humanities and how universities need to both educate global citizens and play an important role in local transformations. Finally, Iman El Kaffass emphasized the fact that “old civilizations didn’t have the current compartmentalization into disciplines: this is a creation of the modern world”. She also claimed that “structure should be a tool, not a prison”.

One of the aims of this Conference was to showcase good practices in the integration of different subjects, what are traditionally called disciplines. That is why one of the sessions was devoted to cases of synergies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, VirginiaTech and a European-funded project called “Teachener”. Brian Subirana from the MIT affirmed that “in ten or fifteen years everything will be united” and that the title of the Conference should be “merged” instead of “synergies” to better emphasize this union. Daniel Breslau from VirginiaTech argued that, in his view, expertise in one field should precede work with other fields, and finally Meritxell Martell and Piotr Stankiewicz described the “Teachener” project in which they are investigating and promoting the integration of social sciences and humanities in teaching about energy and developing an Edu-Kit for professors.

The official opening of the Conference was followed by interventions from Josep A. Planell, Lluís Baulenas, general secretary at the Inter-University Council of Catalonia (CIC), Ignasi López, director of the Department of Science at “la Caixa” Banking Foundation and Itaf Ben Abdallah, senior advisor on higher education and research at the Union for the Mediterranean (UpM).
After lunch, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, president of Fundación Cultura de Paz and former director general of UNESCO, gave a keynote speech titled “Higher education in the new era”. Mayor Zaragoza commented that “we are at a time when many world threats are potentially irreversible and when only by promoting humanities, which are so essential in the educational process, can we exercise our distinctive human faculties to tackle those challenges”.

The Conference continued with a brief presentation by the Chairs of the different workshops and Josep Tornabell and Ada Fontecilla, professor and student from Escola Massana, explained the creation process and rationale behind the fortune cookies that were used in the different workshops, as well as the educational approach at Escola Massana, one of Barcelona’s most renowned art and design schools.

The participants were split into three different groups for the different workshops.

Posters

During lunch breaks, the following posters featuring cases of integration and synergies between science, technology and humanities were showcased:

“Teachener” by Meritxell Martell and Piotr Stankiewicz (Merience and Nicolaus Copernicus University)

“Integrating Technology with Humanities and Social Sciences” by Nandita Koshal (O.P. Jindal Global University)

“Projecta-U” by Anna Aguilar and Olga Torres (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

“Analysis of gender inequality in STEM in Spanish higher education” by Ana Fernández (Universidade da Coruña)

“HATCENTER” by Michal Krawczak and Agnieszka Jelewska (Adam Mickiewicz University)

“The Imagination Prescription: preparing the next generation of medical professionals” by Cyndi Richards and Nomi Eve (Drexel University)

“EVALOE” by Marta Gracia, Marta Cuatrecasas, Maria Ribera and Jordi Casanovas (Universitat de Barcelona and Universitat Politècnica de Barcelona -BarcelonaTech"

“NODES Magazine” by Pau Alsina (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)

“Arts Degree” by Pau Alsina and Laia Blasco (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)

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WORKSHOP 1

Humanities beyond higher education

Workshop 1 was led by Marina Garcés and featured Susana Arias, coordinator of the Barcelona Humanities Institute and Tahar Labassi, professor of linguistics in the department of English at the University of Tunis. In this workshop, participants were asked to reflect on four words:

- Transformations
- Gaps
- Cooperation(s)
- Challenges

The workshop focused on the role of humanities in our societies beyond the walls of universities and research centers. The participants highlighted the importance of finding new avenues of collaboration between a complex network of actors and proposed an education in non-marketable values to readdress the problem of students perceiving humanities to offer less economic and professional output compared to other disciplines. Tahar Labassi argued that, in the case of Tunisia “the fact of having a young population without a minimum intellectual thinking in the humanities generates the affiliation of a considerable volume of those people in extremist or terrorist parties/groups”. Another element of this workshop was the so-called “epistemology of science”, what sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel calls “epistemic racism”, a reason why we find a large volume of invisible knowledge that will “barely transcend the borders of the country where it is originated”.

The case of the Barcelona Humanities Institute was presented by Susana Arias as one of success in creating and disseminating knowledge through collaborative work and as a place to attract talent to conduct research in humanities among people that are unable to enter academia.

WORKSHOP 2

Education from a humanistic approach: teaching for the future

Workshop 2 was chaired by David Bueno and featured Manale Adnane, student of architecture at the Euromediterranean University of Fes, Fernando Giráldez, professor of physiology at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, and Daniel Breslau, professor and chair of the Science, Technology, and Society department at Virginia Tech.

The workshop was structured as group debates around a set of questions that were introduced using the fortune cookies that were distributed at the beginning of the session. Afterwards, speakers delivered short presentations derived from those group discussions and the workshop ended with a debate among all participants. The questions that were the starting point of the workshop were the following:

1. What should the main objective(s) of higher education be?
2. How can we foster the exchange of knowledge between science, technology, humanities and arts? What should the goals of this exchange be?
3. Generally, curricula tend to focus on what should be learnt. Is it also important to focus on the reasons for certain concepts/abilities/aptitudes, and what should these be?
4. Why should humanities and arts be included in science and technology programmes? Is it necessary to include them?
5. Why should scientific and technologic knowledge be included in arts and humanities? Is it necessary to include them?

Participants emphasized the need to provide students with tools to deal with knowledge besides knowledge itself, hence the need to move beyond contents to also deal with the development of abilities (values, critical thinking). The participants said that “contents will be available everywhere in the near future, but not values and abilities”, and also called for policymakers to facilitate interdisciplinarity in the curriculum.

Other important ideas were the need to convert classes into workshops: we need human skills to treat each other as human beings: “we have moved from text to context” observed Alireza Omidbakhsh, adding that “we need to listen to each other because we are not finding time for each other, we live in a fast-moving world”.

It was also noted that creativity is very relevant in research, and not only in art, but people are resistant to changes. The participants also stated that a “kaleidoscopic education” improves decision-making and increases perspective.
In turn, Fernando Giráldez explained his experience of working on neurosciences and art and the importance of understanding how the brain works. Daniel Breslau included a sceptical note on interdisciplinarity by commenting that we also need to understand the problems that it entails. He gave some examples of what can go wrong with it, such as the pressure exerted by corporations to influence how disciplines work, whereby interdisciplinarity becomes the tool for driving the market and production.

Manale Adnane explained the case of the Euromediterranean University of Fes, whose aim is to train “citizens of tomorrow” by focusing on five main elements: multilingualism, multiculturalism, international mobility, eco citizenship and social responsibility. She also explained that in her case, architecture converges with different disciplines (art, sciences, and social sciences) and how that helps her to constantly improve her education.

David Bueno explained his work using data on neuroscience to improve learning and added that “when we learn something that is ‘transversal’, what we learn is better fixed in the brain”. 
WORKSHOP 3
Research and impact: bridging the gap in diverse knowledge fields

Workshop 3 was led by Josep Casanovas and featured Gemma Derick, director of the Centre for Higher Education Research and Evaluation at Lancaster University and Ismael Ràfols, research fellow at Ingenio (CSIC-UPV).

The workshop followed the same structure as the previous one, with a set of questions hidden inside the fortune cookies distributed at the beginning of the session. The questions proposed for debate were the following:

1. Which are the most reliable indicators when we evaluate research in relation to science and technology? And for humanities?
2. How do we value other qualities, such as intuition, peripheral thinking, cooperative resolution, etc.?
3. What effects do rankings have on humanities?
4. What are the challenges related to the interdisciplinary of research projects? What is the foreseeable future for interdisciplinary research projects?
5. Impact and “profitability” of Humanities. Criteria and parameters. Should we defend the non-profit/useless understanding of having knowledge in Humanities?

Some of the first ideas raised were that there are major differences depending on the region in question – there are regions that give more importance to rankings and others to inclusion. In certain regions, the importance of rankings is related to the attraction of international students. For example, the Anglo-Saxon university system is more business-oriented than that of LATAM. The attendees reached a few conclusions: first, that the relevance and acceptance of rankings is different not only depending on discipline but also depending on regions and sociocultural differences, and second, that we all suffer from the same global trends. Other ideas raised were the need to work in networks, the need to define better indicators for humanities, and the fact that indicators are not as relevant for humanities and social sciences as they are for science and technology.

Gemma Derrick noted that we need to convince politicians that research benefits them, that we are our own stakeholders and have an incredible effect on the environment, that there is a huge potential of researchers in society and we are all fighting for the same questions, and that what divides us is that we come from different points of view, and we need to talk the same language: we are all reaching the same conclusions, we are just doing it in different ways.

Ismael Ràfols, in turn, explained that there are problems with the evaluation of humanities: assessment models assume stratification based on the capacity to contribute to state-of-the-art research as in the natural sciences. Many innovations are not necessarily good for human development; however, universities are part of this innovation system. Following the linear model of innovation, he commented that there is a broad consensus that the disconnection between economic growth and well-being is increasing and there is certainly a “gap” between the types of research and problems we have. He ended by asserting that we need “a 3rd framework of thinking for innovation: a framework consistent with the movements of open science, responsible and ethical research, responsibility of science”. Moreover, evaluation should not only be undertaken by experts but by experts together: a process shared with the relevant stakeholders.

The participants found that there should be ways of understanding which research is good or has potential in society, that collaboration among students is the future and that there is a need for new forms of evaluation that take into account geographical and cultural differences.

The day concluded with a visit to the Maritime Museum of Barcelona, including dinner, sponsored by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).
The second day, November 20th, started with a keynote address by Rosi Braidotti, philosopher and distinguished professor at Utrecht University and director of the Centre for the Humanities in Utrecht: “the Critical Posthumanities”. Braidotti started with the statement that “we are currently witnessing a boom in scholarship, in the humanities and social sciences, about the human”. She discussed how there is certain anxiety regarding everything that is human whereby “we are worried about the future of mankind”. However, she argued that despite this anxiety, “the evidence provided by posthuman scholarship shows not only a crisis, but also a remarkable upsurge of inspiration”.

Braidotti noted that “in humanities we are in the field of transdisciplinarity, beyond interdisciplinarity ... humanities come back to the center, to the fight, to the battle, humanities fight back”. In her view, we are at a crucial moment, which she calls the “posthuman convergence,” whereby specific forms of criticism, understanding, knowledge and self-understanding of the humanities are more important than ever. She added that she does not particularly like the term “posthumanities” in reference to new configurations of knowledge that are dubbed “humanities”, such as environmental, digital, medical, neural and global issues. She questioned the very rapid institutionalization of this new reconfiguration at universities, and claimed that “innovative and threatening in equal measure, the phenomenon of what I call the Critical Posthumanities represent both an alternative to the neo-liberal governance of academic knowledge, dominated by quantitative data and control, and a re-negotiation of its terms.” She proposes “affirmative ethics” as an alternative solution.

After the keynote, Pep Tornabell and Berta Ballestín from Escola Massana and the local advisory team, Marina Garcés, David Bueno and Josep Casanovas, described the workshops that were about to be held, as well as the fortune cookies used in them.

The attendees were again split into three different groups to attend the three different workshops.
WORKSHOP 4
Gender and equality: transdisciplinary approaches to gender

Workshop 4 was chaired by Marina Garcés and featured Josep Joan Moreso, professor at Universitat Pompeu Fabra and president of the Catalan Agency for University Quality (AQU), Irene Jorge, project manager at the Technology Transfer Center of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya-BarcelonaTech, and Maria Olivella, equality unit coordinator at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

The workshop was structured around debates on four keywords:
- Invisibilities
- Violence(s)
- Inequalities
- Diversities

The groups were asked to consider a keyword and think of challenges and proposals related to it.

During the session, the experiences of Catalan universities regarding gender equality were highlighted. Moreso explained that AQU has developed a guide to incorporate the gender perspective into bachelor and master’s degrees. Maria Olivella said that Universitat Oberta de Catalunya recently created an equality council to work on the topic of equality in the humanities department. Despite these experiences, the speakers agreed on the need to introduce the gender perspective to teaching, especially for professors of “masculinized” disciplines like physics and mathematics. “As long as we continue to educate women from when they are children to devote their work to tasks related to caretaking, it will be difficult for them to see the social utility of degrees such as physics or mathematics”. In fact, as shown by the data presented by Moreso, the degrees with the highest female participation are clearly linked to tasks related to care and reproductive work: physiotherapy (92%), pedagogy (83.9%), education (82.9%) and nursing (82.3%).

In relation to inequalities, one of the examples presented was the difference in references in textbooks to men and women, where in certain areas women only appear in 7% of the references. Another problem highlighted was the visibility of women in senior university positions, such as heads of studies and departments. For example, only 20% of Spanish philosophy researchers are women. The participants were asked to think of institutional mechanisms that might boost their visibility. What can be done at universities beyond establishing protocols on violence?

In relation to quotas, Olivella said that “there is reluctance among women to be chosen as chairs through a female quota. Many people criticize quotas for being ‘paternalistic’. Anyways, it must be borne in mind that it is also thanks to quotas that the problem becomes visible”. However, without other measures - besides quotas - the problem will not be solved. Therefore, “it is necessary to explore new formulas such as those that apply to the British countries in much of the private sector. While there are no quotas as such, many companies value diversity very positively and seek to build diverse work teams without exerting any form of discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity or class in the process of personnel selection”.

In October 2018, the European Association for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (EAWIST) and the Open University in Catalonia led a workshop that gathered more than 100 women in Spanish universi- ties. The workshop was aimed at creating a community of researchers and professionals who could work together to promote gender equality in science and technology. The participants were divided into groups to discuss the invisibilities of women in science, the roles of women in leadership positions, and the challenges faced by women in academic careers.

The workshop was organized around four key topics: invisibilities, violence(s), inequalities, and diversities. The participants were asked to consider each of these topics and to develop proposals for action to address the gender gaps in science and technology. The discussions highlighted the need for more support for women in science and technology, as well as for greater diversity in the academic profession.

The workshop also featured a presentation by Marina García, a professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, who discussed the importance of promoting gender equality in science and technology. She emphasized the need for policies that support women’s participation in these fields, as well as for initiatives that promote diversity in the academic profession.

The participants also heard from Josep Joan Moreso, a professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra and the president of the Catalan Agency for University Quality. He discussed the role of universities in promoting gender equality and the importance of creating a culture of respect and support for women in science and technology.

The workshop concluded with a panel discussion featuring representatives from a variety of organizations involved in promoting gender equality in science and technology. The panelists discussed the challenges faced by women in these fields and the strategies that could be adopted to address them.

The workshop was an important opportunity for women in science and technology to come together and to share their experiences and ideas. It was also an important step in promoting gender equality in these fields, and it is hoped that the proposals developed during the workshop will be adopted by universities and other organizations in Spain.

In conclusion, the workshop was a valuable opportunity for women in science and technology to come together and to share their experiences and ideas. It was also an important step in promoting gender equality in these fields, and it is hoped that the proposals developed during the workshop will be adopted by universities and other organizations in Spain.
Labour market data was also presented to the participants. Although the differences are not very pronounced, except in the field of humanities and the social sciences, men have higher employment rates than women. “The data show us a clearly worrying situation and at the same time give us enough arguments to assert that gender inequality is present and reproducing in all layers of society”.

Irene Jorge described the European funded GEECCO (Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment) project and emphasized the need for more data in relation to gender, since there is currently a significant gap in this regard. Jorge said that it is necessary to incorporate the gender dimension as a priority in all stages of research. Who decides the research agenda? Who will be the users of this new knowledge? Who can benefit?

As a main conclusion, the participants and speakers agreed that more data, research and examples of good practices are required, must be applied to universities, and should take into account the legal, political and cultural framework of each specific case in order to begin to explore new ways to guarantee gender equality at universities and in the academic careers of teaching and research staff.

WORKSHOP 5
Sustainability and ethics: higher education contributing to the world’s challenges

Workshop 5 was led by David Bueno and featured Marco Armiero, director of the Environmental Humanities Lab at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Moji T. Bakare-Odunola, professor of pharmaceutical chemistry at the University of Ilorin and Alireza Omidbakhsh, professor and director of Cultural and Social Affairs at the University of Allaeh Tabataba’i.

As in the previous workshops, a set of questions were hidden inside fortune cookies. The participants had to find their peers (the ones with the same question) and start a discussion. The questions proposed were the following:

1. Taking into account SDGs, should ethics be integrated into higher education? Under which premises/assumptions? Which “ethics”? With what objective?

2. Taking into account SDGs, should science and technology be included in all higher education? Under which premises/assumptions? With what objective?

3. Can knowledge of humanities on science and technology programmes help to redefine the anthropocentric vision of the world? With what objective?

4. How does knowledge in humanities contribute to the “world’s challenges” in terms of planetary sustainability (ecological)? With what objective?

5. How can knowledge in humanities contribute to the “world’s challenges” in social sustainability (economic, cultural paradigms, gender)? With what objective?

The participants considered the need to integrate ethics into higher education, but had some important questions: under which premises/assumptions? Which ethics and with what objective? Some of the speakers felt that it depends on the field or area of knowledge.

The participants also argued that humans are responsible for finding solutions to challenges and that we should redefine what it means to be a human being in the face of robotics and emerging technologies. “We will have to find the way to integrate those technologies in our societies”.

The participants claimed that humanities are the way to make society aware of and responsible for global challenges in terms of planetary sustainability. They also highlighted the need to transfer scientific developments to society, and some also argued that art is very important in this process and that global citizenship should be fostered in order to stop populism, for example.

In response to the question about how knowledge in humanities can help to solve the world’s challenges in terms of social sustainability, the participants said that knowledge of what motivates humans is important in order to reach solutions (for instance, climate change fostered by humans). If people accept what’s going on, they will also have to accept restrictions to stop certain processes and control the related costs.

Marco Armiero explained the case of the “Environmental humanities laboratory”, which is based on “un-disciplining everything”, whereby they do multi and interdisciplinary work, but also recognise the limits of disciplines. He claimed that we first need to understand disciplines very well before we can dismantle them and also argued that the words that we use affect the way we think and talk. “Environmental Humanities include all disciplines of the humanities”.

Moji Bakare-Odunola introduced global challenges (health, social, cultural, insecurity, environmental, etc.) and the major problem of funding education and employment. “Technologies simplify the ways things are done. However, technological advancements have almost always been two-sided”. According to her, one of the main roles of higher education is to empower citizens. Because university lecturers are creating future leaders, integrity and ethical values are therefore crucial.
Her recommendations included the availability of expertise in all fields; serious promotion of ethics in academia; interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research; more work on student exchange programmes and the promotion of probity.

Alireza Omidbakhsh, in turn, argued that there are different definitions of ethics. Referring to Foucault and the concept of power, he stated that “power is knowledge, but it is not wisdom” and highlighted the need to go beyond theory to practice. “Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, today is a gift.”
WORKSHOP 6
Humanities towards a more equitable, responsible and democratic society

Workshop 6 was chaired by Josep Casanovas and featured Paul Benneworth, senior researcher at the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente and NORCE, and Joana Ferrer, doctor of philosophy and education sciences.

The participants were first asked to debate a series of questions in groups.

1. How can humanities contribute to the promotion of free, responsible critical thinking beyond their own curricula?
2. How can technology contribute to diversity and reciprocity between cultures and lifestyles?
3. Contribution of humanities as factors of equality in different cultural and political contexts. How can we advance towards global citizenship?
4. What direction should education systems take to incorporate a more humanistic approach?
5. How can critical thinking be awakened/fostered in students and how can they be guided towards such values as social justice and democracy?

Paul Benneworth stated that “a bridge not only has to cross an obstacle but also create a connection between two points”, that we need to understand people’s motivations and needs, and that technology needs to be in tune with our fundamental values as human beings. He also claimed that “there is a need for mutual respect, a new way, and there is a need to allow humanities to expand their knowledge” and concluded by commenting that “humanities are needed if you want to improve possible solutions; humanities give you the tools”.

Conclusions in this regard included the need to transcend egos on both sides and to overcome language and code barriers.

Joana Ferrer stated that “our challenge is to unlearn and also to share knowledge”. She added that there is a need to train and educate competent, responsible and creative citizens: for “it is very important to have analytic and critical thinkers in positions of leadership”. In her view, there are four main aspects to take into account: significant knowledge, communicative knowledge, active knowledge and projective knowledge.

The participants argued that the separation of disciplines in primary and secondary education is the origin of this and it is precisely there that we need to start tackling interdisciplinarity and transversality. The workshop ended with a conversation focused on the dangers in certain regions of teaching humanities and values-based content such as human rights and democracy, the conclusion being that “teachers need to be facilitators and to create a safe space for students to express themselves freely as well as teach global citizens”.

Over lunch, the participants could engage their peers in further discussions and view the posters displayed in the main common area.

The afternoon featured a session on “Artificial Intelligence and the Seven Liberal Arts” with Josep M. Ganyet, CEO at Mortensen and professor at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Ventura Barba, executive director at Advanced Music – Sónar, and Pau Alsina, professor at the Arts and Humanities Department, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and director of Artnodes Journal.

In this session, it was argued that the pace at which technology is adopted nowadays is exponential. This revolution is based on the digital one of the 1960s and is happening at the crossroads between atoms, bits and genes, meaning that an innovation in any one of these areas spreads to the rest. This situation, the speakers argue, has an impact on employment and more deeply on what it means to be human. Work is one of the main creators of people’s identities and any change in this area causes economic, political and social changes too. This context is forcing us to think about what it means to work, to be free and ultimately what it means to be human. The seven liberal arts, the seven classic arts of the free people: grammar, dialectics, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, play a crucial role in this consideration and its evolution.

“Are machines intelligent? Machines are capable; they are proficient and skilled. Human beings are intelligent”.

Humanities and Higher Education: Generating Synergies between Science, Technology and Humanities
A keynote address by Sarah Hunt followed, titled “Fostering Epistemological Diversity Through Place-based Approaches to Research and Teaching”, in which she commented that it is important for us to challenge the western duality between myth and knowledge and to think about what can be offered by indigenous, yet global, approaches to knowledge creation. She said that “western paradigms exclude a lot of indigenous and other kinds of ways of knowing and being in the world and indigenous studies offer a lot of tools”. She highlighted the need to think of indigenous people as creators of knowledge, not just in terms of the core western idea that they are merely people to be studied or part of nature. She focused on the need to include humanistic training in all disciplines because it is the lack of concern for impact on human life and the future of our planet that has led to some of the problems that we see today: climate change, social unrest, poverty and global hunger. She added that we can draw upon many indigenous solutions to changing environments that might work alongside western science or technology.

Josep M. Vilalta closed the Conference with a brief wrap-up and an explanation of the main output of the event: the 7th edition of the Higher Education in the World Report. Vilalta explained that the Report will be published by autumn 2019 and that there is an open call for anyone who so wishes to submit cases of synergies between science, technology and humanities within and beyond higher education institutions.

The Report will seek to offer the first multi-perspective answer to the topical questions discussed at the Conference and to provide practical tools to tackle issues that are perceived to pose serious challenges to our societies.
Higher Education in the World 7

Higher Education in the World is a collective project published as part of the GUNi Series on the social commitment of universities. It is the result of a global and regional analysis and a specific subject is chosen for each edition. The Report, which considers the key issues and challenges faced by higher education and its institutions in the 21st century, is currently published in English.

Objectives

- To consider the key problems and challenges that higher education and its institutions are facing today.
- To help to refresh ideas, while generating visions and promoting reflection on the contribution of higher education and the knowledge society.
- To provide a toolbox for researchers, policymakers and practitioners.

To date, GUNi has published six reports (2006, 2007, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017), plus a synthesis (2009) that was requested by UNESCO for the World Conference on Higher Education held in Paris in 2009. 19,000 copies have been distributed in 130 countries, and translations of some of the reports have been provided in Spanish, Chinese and Portuguese. The latest edition is available in full as open online content and a summarized edition is available in paper format. 380 internationally renowned experts from more than 60 countries have participated so far.

Information about the previous editions is available at www.guninetwork.org/guni-reports

The 7th GUNi Higher Education in the World Report (HEIW7) will present a comprehensive analysis of the interrelations and synergies between humanities, science and technology in higher education. The Report is a response to the increasing concern about the perception of the usefulness of humanities in contemporary societies, especially in higher education systems, which condition their future.

The GUNi Secretariat and a local and international editorial team are leading this edition of the report:

Local team

- David Bueno - Professor of Genetics at Universitat de Barcelona and former researcher at Oxford University
- Josep Casanovas - Professor of Simulation at Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) and researcher at Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC)
- Marina Garcés - Professor of Philosophy at Universidad de Zaragoza and UOC (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)

International team

- Rosi Braidotti - Philosopher and Distinguished University Professor at Utrecht University and Director of the Centre for the Humanities in Utrecht
- Gemma Derrick - Director of the Centre for Higher Education Research & Evaluation and Senior Lecturer (Higher Education) at Lancaster University
- Arne Jarrick - Professor of History at Stockholm University (SU)
- Alireza Omidbakhsh - Professor of Literatures and Cultures, and Director of Cultural and Social Affairs at the University of Allameh Tabataba i and former researcher at the University of Barcelona
- Peter Okebukola - GUNi Regional Office for Africa
- Axel Didriksson - GUNi Regional Office for Latin America & the Caribbean

GUNi Secretariat

- Josep M. Vilalta - Director
- Alicia Betts - Head of Projects
- Victoria Gómez - Project Officer
- Marta Cayetano - Communication Officer

The specific aims of Higher Education in the World 7 are to:

- Explore the relationship between humanities, science and technology in different societies around the world and showcase examples of synergies in different higher education systems.
- Map and understand the global challenges that are calling for a new paradigm in the relationship between science, technology and humanities and explore the role that higher education should play in addressing them.
- Delve into the issue of the multiplicity of knowledge beyond the current western paradigm of knowledge.
- Explore how humanities should address major current transformations regarding science and technology and their ethical challenges.
- Address the different roles higher education should play as a social agent and explore the possible relationships between university and wider society.
- Identify key skills and competences to be developed in the face of current transformations in social, economic and labour systems, as well as exploring teaching methodologies, curricula and the concept of learning beyond formal education (lifelong learning).
· Identify and understand current issues and trends in research in humanities, science and technology (socially responsible research, budgets, Open Science and Open Data) and discuss possible ways to move forward and enhance research practices and policies.

· Analyze the question of impact in terms of current indicators and measures and their positive and negative influence on science, technology and humanities as well as proposing new options to address current practices and needs.

· Examine how science, technology and humanities can add value to synergetic collaborations.

· Explore the issue of gender equality in terms of access to education, academic careers and the choice of courses.

· Analyze gender in science, technology and humanities in terms of ideological paradigms as well as exploring the way to embed the gender focus throughout the disciplines and beyond specific gender studies.

· Investigate environmental issues (in their broadest sense) in the Anthropocene in terms of knowledge, ethics and human experience as well as exploring the development and implementation of the SDGs in all fields of knowledge.

· Discuss engagement in its broadest sense, including democracy, equality and identity through the lens of humanities and the role of higher education in this process.

· Examine/consider the role and commitment of higher education systems in relation to the future of work, as well as its dignity and its quality.

The Report will be structured around a map of open problems and questions regarding the following headlines: worldwide context, knowledge society, institutional, education, research, impact, gender, equality, environmental and engagement.

This edition of the Report will include special contributions:

· Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
· Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
· GUNi Africa
· GUNi Latin America and the Caribbean
OPEN CALL

One important aspect of the World Report is the presentation of examples of good practices regarding integration and synergies between science, technology and humanities in higher education institutions, but also beyond those and between them and other important societal stakeholders. GUNi is inviting interested parties to submit cases and innovations with regard to this new approach in academia and beyond.

Cases of good practices and experiences will be included in the Report as special boxes. Authors who would like to present a case of a good practice should send a WORD document in Times New Roman/Calibri/Arial point 12 (1.15 spaced) with a text not exceeding 300 words explaining the case and mentioning the institution, country and link to the website (if there is one). The name of the author(s), affiliation and short bio (10 lines) should also be included. Proposals should be sent to info@guninetwork.org and senders should specify in the SUBJECT Call HEIW7.

*Due to spatial constraints, not all cases received will appear in the Report. A certain number selected by the Editorial Team will be featured, and any others received will be posted on the GUNi website.

Would you like to contribute?
Send us an email with the subject Call HEIW7 to info@guninetwork.org

We look forward to hearing from you!
Join the GUNi network! Send an email expressing interest at info@guninetwork.org

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