

Pathways to 2050 and beyond

FINDINGS FROM A PUBLIC CONSULTATION
ON THE FUTURES OF HIGHER EDUCATION



unesco

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Foreword

We live in a time where it sometimes seems as if the future can be more foreseen than ever before, narrowing the gap between what we know today and what may come tomorrow. Rapid advances in technology and research have been driving transformations in education, healthcare, and all spheres of society. The science and knowledge underpinning these changes bring hope to many: hope for a better life, hope for more peaceful and connected communities, hope for a more sustainable world.

It is also today's issues that cause apprehension and uncertainty about what may lie ahead. Our planet's vulnerability against fast-paced human-induced climate change, the persistence of societal inequalities, waves of political extremism and conflict, and the spread of massive scale viruses and diseases threaten to undermine aspirations and hope. How can we think about the future if we do not seem able to cope with the present?

And yet, that is exactly what we must do. By recognizing that the solutions to tomorrow's issues are grounded in the world today, we can keep what is good that we should take with us into the future. Similarly, we can reject that which is outdated or harmful. Action must come from all fronts and with the participation of every change agent society can provide.

Higher education has an important responsibility to steward these processes through its core functions of knowledge generation and knowledge sharing. We should look to higher education both to enact change as well as to equip future generations to make their own contributions. How higher education might approach this task forms the basis of this report by UNESCO IESALC which shares

the findings of a public consultation on the futures of higher education.

This report, a valuable contribution to UNESCO's Futures of Education initiative that complements UNESCO IESALC's previous expert consultation, collected the views of 1,200 people in almost 100 countries. UNESCO IESALC asked them to share their hopes, concerns, and ideas for how higher education could contribute to better futures for all. The report showcases the similarities as well as some of the many differences of opinion about what higher education does and could or should do in the years to come.

The high interest in this public consultation organized by UNESCO IESALC and the strength of respondents' commitment to the futures of higher education are causes for celebration. People see higher education continuing to play a significant role in making the world a better place, supported in this endeavour by governments and trusted by civil society. We may not hold the answer to the question of what the futures will hold, but this report shows that there is collective will and support for higher education to be an integral part of our search for the pathways to 2050 and beyond.



Andrew Augustine

Chair
UNESCO IESALC Governing Board

Introduction

The aim of this public consultation on the futures of higher education was to understand people's hopes and concerns for the years ahead and how these inform the ideas they have regarding the futures of higher education. The consultation was coordinated by UNESCO's International Institute for Higher Education (UNESCO IESALC) between May and August 2021.

This UNESCO IESALC project on the futures of higher education has been undertaken within the framework of the UNESCO initiative on the futures of education, which seeks to "reimagine how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet."¹

For UNESCO, 'futures' envisions a horizon both towards and beyond 2050 and encompasses the many ways that the futures might be. 'Futures' is therefore a plural concept, taking into account the multiple pathways and global scenarios that could influence our journeys from today through to the next thirty years and beyond.

To date, UNESCO IESALC's main contributions to this major global undertaking include *Thinking Higher and Beyond: Perspectives on the futures of higher education to 2050*², published in May 2021, and this report *Pathways to 2050: Findings from a public consultation on the futures of higher education*, published in November 2021. The next planned phase for this project is a youth consultation.

In *Thinking Higher and Beyond*, UNESCO IESALC provided a synthesis of consultations with 25 global higher education experts. The report discussed experts' viewpoints on the concept and purposes of higher education, its functions, and the ways in which higher educa-

1 <https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/>
2 <https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/futures-of-higher-education/>

UNESCO IESALC public consultation on the futures of higher education

Higher education will shape the future of humanity and the planet. Regardless of where you live and work, or whether you have experienced higher education, you have the right to voice your opinion on the futures of higher education.

By higher education, we mean all types of study programmes and courses of study at post-secondary level. Higher education can take place in universities, colleges, academies, conservatories, and specialized institutes.

We invite everyone to join UNESCO IESALC in exploring the futures of higher education. This public consultation is linked to UNESCO's Futures of Education, a global initiative to reimagine how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet.

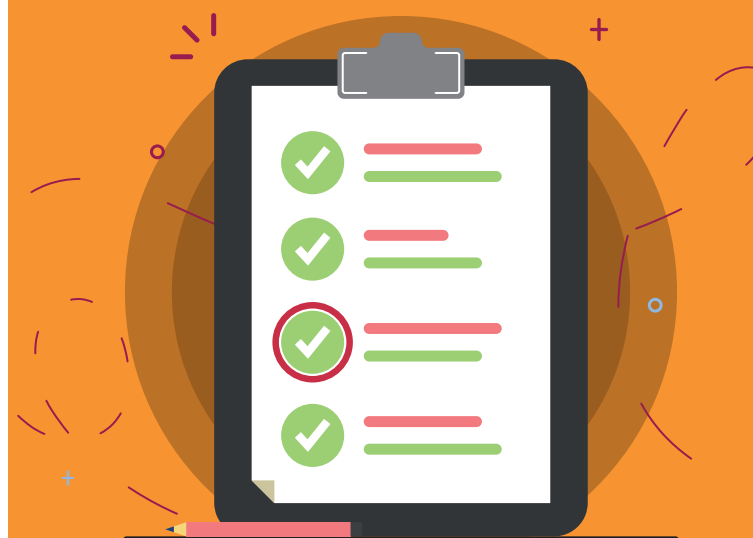
Survey questions

When you think about 2050, what are you most hopeful about?

When you think about 2050, what are you most concerned about?

How would you like higher education to be in 2050?

How could higher education contribute to better futures for all in 2050?



tion could fulfil its missions. The opportunities and challenges that may lie ahead on the paths to 2050 were addressed at the end of the report.

Key messages from experts on the futures of higher education are expressed in *Thinking Higher and Beyond* in four broad statements regarding how higher education could be shaped and improved to lead to better futures for all. The statements speak of taking active responsibility for our common humanity, promoting wellbeing and sustainability, drawing strength from intercultural and epistemic diversity, and upholding and creating interconnectedness at multiple levels.

This report, *Pathways to 2050 and beyond: Findings from a public consultation on the futures of higher education*, is a synthesis of the results of the public consultation which was open to all members of the public. Respondents were asked to complete a short online survey that was made available in several languages. The survey was completed by 1,200 people in close to 100 countries.

The **Methodology** used to support the public consultation is explained and details **About the respondents** are included in the next two sections.

This report follows a similar approach to that taken in *Thinking Higher and Beyond* by identifying the broad areas of convergence among respondents participating in the public consultation. These are compiled as **Pathways to 2050 and beyond**. The four pathways reflect respondents' hopes and concerns for the futures and resonate with their views on the futures of higher education.

These pathways can be thought of as interconnected levels. The first has to do with the individual and their *quality of life*; the second is the *social change* around us; the third is the need to take *care of the environment* and applies to both individuals and societies; and the fourth, the *development of technology*, is a pathway that has the potential to change people and their environments.

The report then has five parts. Direct quotes from respondents are included throughout and translated from the original language where applicable.

Part 1 summarizes respondents' **Hopes and concerns for the future** and groups them according to the four pathways that emerged as the most prominent in the consultation: quality of life, social change, care of the environment, and the development of technology.

Part 2 of the report, **Higher education in 2050**, sets out the main themes of consultation on the futures of higher education and how respondents envision these futures as we look ahead to 2050 and beyond. To reflect the respondents' voices, the headings in this part are derived from the replies provided in the public consultation.

In **Part 3, Analysis by region and profile**, responses to the public consultation are analyzed according to three important demographic elements: world region, gender identity, and youth. The analysis of the data by region and profile helps us to understand how – or whether – these elements affect people's hopes and concerns for 2050 and their visions for higher education in the futures.

Given that this public consultation took place during 2021 at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic was still very much a part of everyone's lives, **Part 4** examines the **Impact of Covid-19 on future visions**. Those respondents who mentioned Covid-19 highlighted the intersecting effects of the pandemic and related it to their expectations for higher education in the years ahead.

Finally, **Part 5** of the report suggests six **Calls to action** based on the findings from the public consultation and reflects on new and ongoing efforts by UNESCO. These calls to action seek to inspire more people to take up the challenge of envisioning better futures for all through the contributions that higher education can make to our pathways to 2050.

Methodology

This section describes how the public consultation was developed, how it was disseminated, how the responses were analyzed, and its main limitations.

Survey design

The public consultation was open for 10 weeks between May and August 2021. It was developed as an online survey and published in four languages: English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. Respondents were also able to submit their responses in Chinese. The survey was open to everyone who could access the online format, which was published on the websites of UNESCO IESALC and UNESCO Futures of Education, with links sent by email to a wide range of international and national mailing lists/social media channels.

To increase response rates, the consultation was designed following the principles set out below:

- **Access:** available in multiple languages in an easy-to-use online system, simple format
- **Engagement:** limited number of questions, time for completion could be as little as two minutes
- **Flexibility:** offers respondents the opportunity to share ideas and suggestions using free text responses, basic demographic aggregate-level data collection, so that individuals cannot be identified

The consultation was designed by the Research and Analysis team at UNESCO IESALC and reviewed by UNESCO's Future of Learning and Innovation team. The questions were professionally translated where in-house expertise was not available.

The survey was divided into two sections following an introduction: an 'About you' section, and a section titled 'How do you see the future?'. The survey design is shown in full in [Annex 1](#).

In the introduction, the context and importance of the consultation were explained. The 'About you' section collected basic demographic data – country of residence, current occupation, age range, and gender identity. Respondents were not obliged to select an age range or a gender identity.

The main section of the survey was 'How do you see the future?'. Here, respondents gave free text

Introduction to the public consultation

Higher education will shape the future of humanity and the planet. Regardless of where you live and work, or whether you have experienced higher education, you have the right to voice your opinion on the futures of higher education.

By higher education, we mean all types of study programmes and courses of study at post-secondary level. Higher education can take place in universities, colleges, academies, conservatories, and specialized institutes.

We invite everyone to join UNESCO IESALC in exploring the futures of higher education. This public consultation is linked to UNESCO's Futures of Education, a global initiative to reimagine how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet.

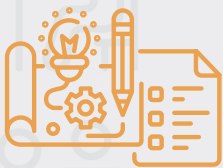
METHODOLOGY

- 50,000 people reached directly
- All world regions

- Drafting independently and in teams
- Internal and external peer review
- Revised and finalized

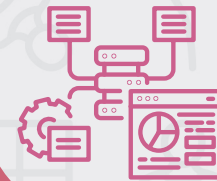
DISSEMINATION

WRITING UP



SURVEY DESIGN

- **5 languages:** Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish
- **Online survey format**
- **Open to everyone**
- **2 sections:** 'About you' and 'How do you see the future?'



DATA ANALYSIS

- **Preparation:**
 - Raw data checked and cleaned: 1,199 valid responses from 97 countries
 - Datasets prepared for analysis
- **Analysis:**
 - Datasets manually coded using a description-focused coding strategy
 - Codes created independently then checked in pairs
- **Consolidations:**
 - Codes validated by whole team
 - Code frequency analysis performed to identify most common categories
 - Code categories matched to higher-level themes
- **Results:**
 - 389 codes used a total of 9,350 times
 - Four pathways to 2050 and beyond identified
 - Main themes on higher education created



responses to four open questions on their visions for 2050. The first two open questions were an invitation to respondents to consider the 2050 landscape and to express their main hopes and concerns for the futures. By engaging with the contextual setting of thirty years from today, respondents adopted a futures-thinking mindset that also helped them to consider how today's problems will shape the changes required by 2050. Respondents were also better equipped to think differently about what higher education in the futures could be like.

Following the questions on hopes and concerns, respondents were then asked to set out their vision for higher education in 2050 and to comment on how higher education could contribute to better futures for all. These questions were also used in UNESCO IESALC's expert consultation on the futures of higher education, the report of which was published in May 2021.³ The idea behind extending the same questions to a global audience was to bring new perspectives and ideas to light.

Dissemination

Dissemination of the public consultation was extensive, reaching international networks, regional and national associations, and local organizations. The invitation to participate in the public consultation was shared widely on social media, in email mailing lists, and by direct requests. The public consultation was also promoted by UNESCO's Futures of Education initiative as well as numerous regional and national UNESCO offices.

Overall, it is estimated that 50,000 people were reached directly using this dissemination strategy. The number of people reached indirectly is likely to have been larger but is not possible to

³ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377530>

How do you see the future?

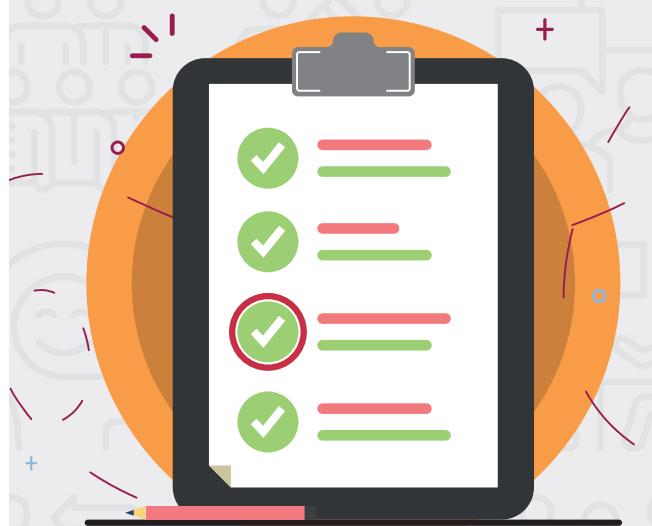
Public consultation questions

When you think about 2050, what are you most hopeful about?

When you think about 2050, what are you most concerned about?

How would you like higher education to be in 2050?

How could higher education contribute to better futures for all in 2050?



measure accurately. The regional distribution of responses is discussed in the section [About the respondents](#).

Data analysis

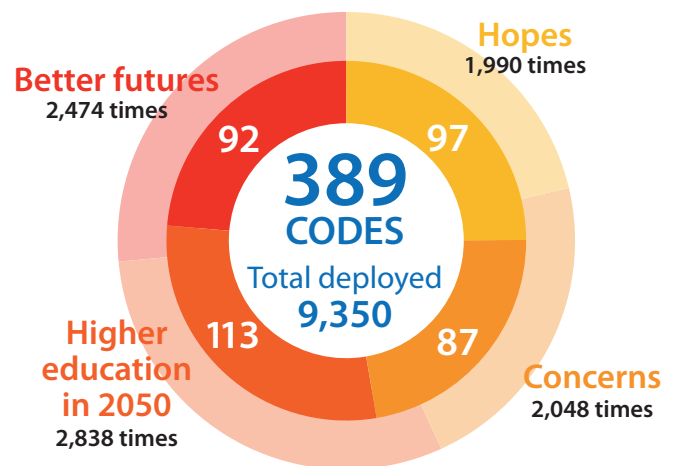
The Research and Analysis unit at UNESCO IESALC created a data analysis strategy to analyze the responses. After closing the survey and removing duplicate and invalid responses from the dataset, 1,199 valid responses remained (see [About the respondents](#) for details). Responses received in Chinese, French, and Portuguese were translated into English and the dataset divided into two batches for analysis: responses received in Spanish and those received in or translated into English.

The responses to the two questions on hopes and concerns were combined; responses to the two questions about higher education were analyzed separately. Demographic data was not used during this stage to avoid unintentionally introducing bias to the analysis. Each group of responses was manually coded by the team, using a description-focused coding strategy. The focus of the coding was therefore on conveying what respondents said, rather than trying to interpret or assign meaning to their responses.

The team first worked independently to code assigned batches of responses, with each response coded by two people for greater reliability. The two sets of codes were reviewed together by the same two people and a set of agreed codes proposed. Following this, a consolidation process was undertaken to review all the agreed codes per group across both working languages to combine any similar terms and clarify any remaining inconsistencies or ambiguities. A combined English/Spanish frequency analysis of each group of codes was then performed to identify the most common categories and to match codes to these higher-level categories.

In total, 389 codes were used: 97 in the question on hopes, 87 in the question on concerns, 113 in the question on how you would like higher

education to be in 2050 and 92 in the question on how higher education could contribute to better futures for all. The codes were deployed a total of 9,350 times: 1,990 times in the question on hopes; 2,048 in the question on concerns, 2,838 in the question on how you would like higher education to be in 2050, and 2,474 on higher education's contributions to better futures for all.

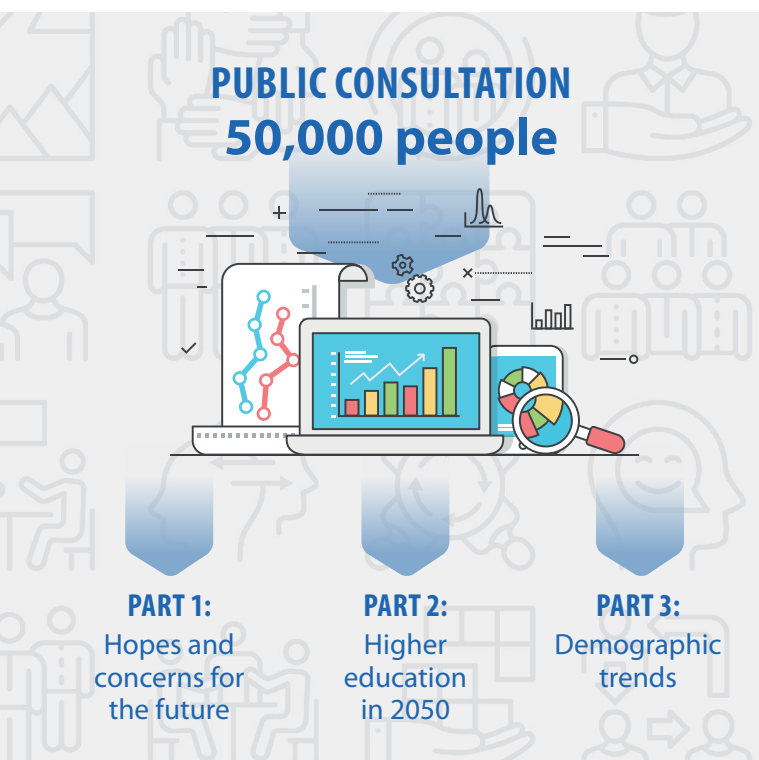


As a result of this analysis, the four [pathways to 2050 and beyond](#) were identified. These pathways are reflected in the responses to people's main hopes and concerns for 2050: quality of life, social change, care of the environment, and development of technology. These are presented in [Part 1: Hopes and concerns for the future](#).

The responses to the open questions relating to higher education are shown in [Part 2: Higher education in 2050 Part 2:](#). This part of the report sets out people's visions of how higher education could be organized, what its functions might be, and ways that it might change from today.

The closed questions in the 'About you' section were analyzed both separately and together with the open questions. This enabled the team to have a clear understanding of the distribution of responses according to the demographic information collected (location, occupation, age, gender), as reported in [About the respondents](#).

Subsequent to the analysis of the open questions, the responses were then cross-checked with the demographic information to identify trends, patterns, and differences across groups. The findings from this phase of the analysis are reported in [Part 3: Analysis by region and profile](#).



Limitations

The main methodological limitation of this public consultation was lack of representativeness. This was the case for youth, the African region, and the Arab States region, where participation was not as extensive in comparison to those of other age groups or regions. While we do not know the global distribution of the population identifying their gender as non-binary or in other ways, we still believe that their participation in this consultation was low. There needs to be more spaces where the voices of these groups can be heard and where they can express their viewpoints.

To encourage participation in the survey, no details that could be personally identifiable were requested and no verification of the information

provided was required. For the same reason, the amount of demographic information collected in the consultation was very limited. It did not include, for example, questions about respondents' socio-economic status or whether they identified as belonging to an ethnic, linguistic, or other group. Profile data was therefore based on respondents' self-identification and, as noted in the [About the respondents](#) section, the results have not been weighted as this was not designed to be a globally representative sample.

One of the limitations to participation was the impossibility of the involvement of persons without an internet connection, device, or someone to assist with filling in the information. The consultation results might have been different had their participation been possible, including those who, due to these limitations, may have been better positioned to offer viable solutions aligned to their barriers and realities, and from different perspectives. Nevertheless, the results are important, and this is reflected in the common concern of those who could participate and who noted the importance of reducing the barriers to access and guaranteeing equal opportunities.

About the respondents

A total of 1,208 respondents completed the survey. After tallying duplicates and invalid responses, the total number of valid responses reached 1,199. Of this total, 55% were answered in Spanish, 35% in English, 6% in Chinese, 2% in French, and 2% in Portuguese.

The age distribution ranged from under 15 to over 60. The highest participation was registered in ages between 31-45 and 46-60 with 30% and 32% respectively, followed by young people (16-30) with 19% and those over 60, comprising 17%. A very small number of people (1%) preferred not to disclose their age or were under 15.

In this report, regions are defined by UNESCO groupings. In this instance, just over half (56%) of respondents were from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC); Asia and the Pacific made up just over a quarter of total participation (26%); Europe and North America reached 13% followed by Africa (4%) and Arab States (1%). Due to UNESCO IESALC's current mandate and historic strengths in engaging with communities in LAC, the high participation rate from this region was expected.

Despite the lower response rates in some regions, it is important to note that the objective of this report was not to establish globally representative results. As such, the results have not been weighted. Even for those regions where participation rates were lower, all the responses contributed equally to building the overall picture presented in the report.

Respondents listed their location across 97 countries worldwide. China, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, and El Salvador are the countries with the highest participation, and together account for 51% of all responses.

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS: LANGUAGE, AGE RANGE AND LOCATION BY REGION



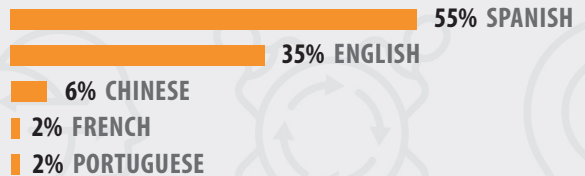
VALID RESPONSES

1,199

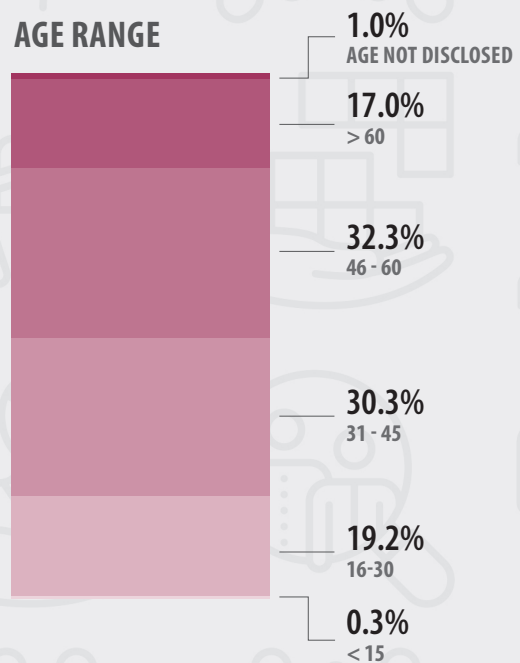
TOTAL RESPONSES

1,208

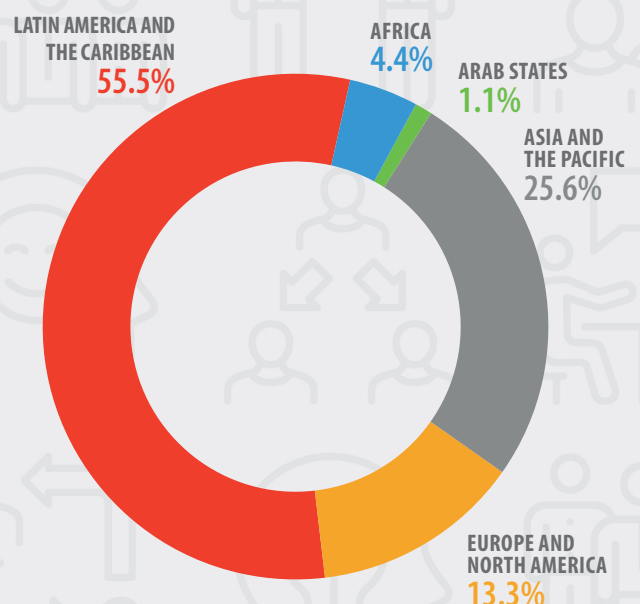
LANGUAGE OF RESPONSE



AGE RANGE



REGION



LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS



RESPONDENTS WERE LOCATED IN 97 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE

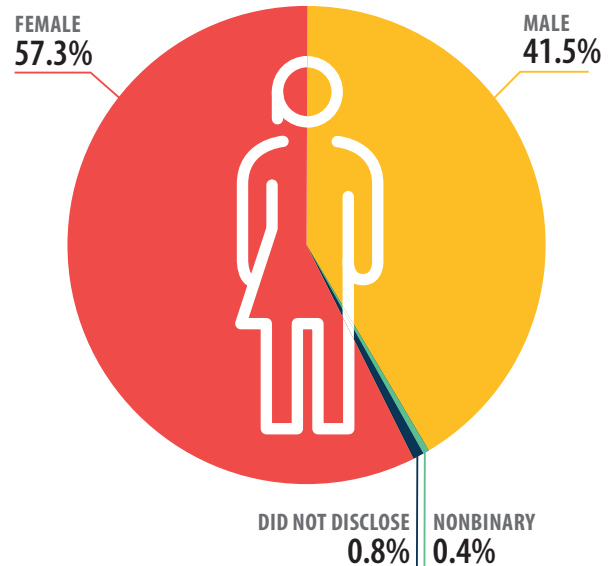
Source: UNESCO IESALC based on United Nations map

Afghanistan	Brazil	Cuba	Ghana	Jamaica	Mali	Niger	Sierra Leone	Uganda
Algeria	Burkina Faso	Denmark	Greece	Japan	Mauritius	Nigeria	Singapore	United Kingdom
Andorra	Burundi	Dominican Republic	Guatemala	Jordan	Mexico	Pakistan	South Africa	United States of America
Angola	Cameroon	Ecuador	Guyana	Kazakhstan	Morocco	Panama	South Korea	Uruguay
Argentina	Canada	Egypt	Honduras	Kenya	Mozambique	Paraguay	Spain	Vanuatu
Australia	Central African Republic	El Salvador	Hungary	Kyrgyzstan	Myanmar	Peru	Sri Lanka	Venezuela
Austria	Chile	Ethiopia	India	Laos	Namibia	Qatar	Palestine	Vietnam
Bangladesh	China	Finland	Indonesia	Lebanon	Nepal	Romania	Switzerland	
Belgium	Colombia	France	Ireland	Madagascar	Netherlands	Russia	Tajikistan	
Bhutan	Costa Rica	Gabon	Italy	Malawi	New Zealand	Saudi Arabia	Thailand	
Bolivia		Germany	Ivory Coast	Malaysia	Nicaragua	Senegal	Turkey	Zambia
								Zimbabwe

Among those who provided their gender identity, 57% identified as female, 41% as male, while fewer than 1% identified as nonbinary and fewer than 1% opted not to disclose this information.

When analyzing gender participation by region, the general pattern of greater female participation was consistent for LAC, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and North America. In the case of Africa, male participation was higher than that of female with a ratio of 3:2. In the Arab States, participation was evenly matched.

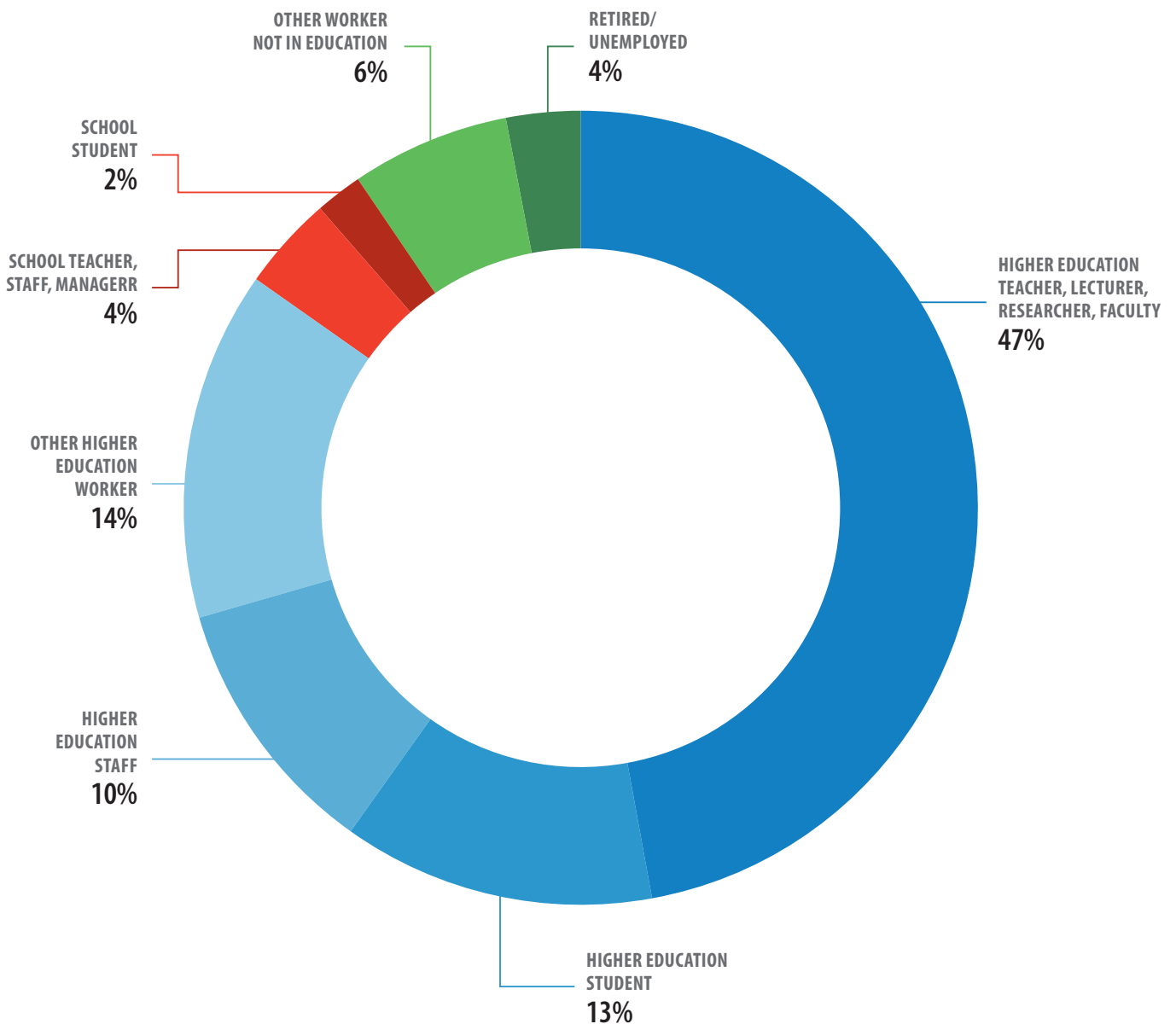
GENDER IDENTITY



In terms of their stated occupation, 84% of the respondents have some connection to the higher education sector. This includes higher education teachers (including lecturers, researchers, and faculty members), who made up almost half of the total number of respondents (47%). Other higher education sector respondents were students and staff and those working in the public and private sectors in fields related to higher education. The remaining 16% of respondents worked in other fields (8%), were school students (4%), or were retired/unemployed (4%).

The high number of responses from within the higher education sector suggests a robust level of interest in and concern for the futures of higher education. It also highlights why many of the ideas put forward are based on existing models of higher education which, in a way, could influence different ways of thinking and innovating towards new models or initiatives.

CURRENT OCCUPATION



Pathways to 2050 and beyond

The results of the UNESCO IESALC public consultation illustrated a rich diversity in people’s hopes and concerns for 2050, with the 1,199 respondents from almost 100 countries advancing multiple ideas for higher education and its contribution to better futures for all. Within this rich global diversity, it was still possible to identify four pathways to the futures which had the broad agreement of respondents and/or where multiple respondents expressed themselves similarly.

These four pathways, illustrated in Table 1, intertwine throughout the presentation of the findings from the consultation that follows in this report, and are linked to the calls for action suggested in [Part 5](#). The pathways do not propose a single vision for higher education but can be considered as complementary concepts and ideas that can sup-

port higher education and its stakeholders around the world to contribute to better futures for all as we plan for the next thirty years and beyond.

INTERCONNECTING PATHWAYS

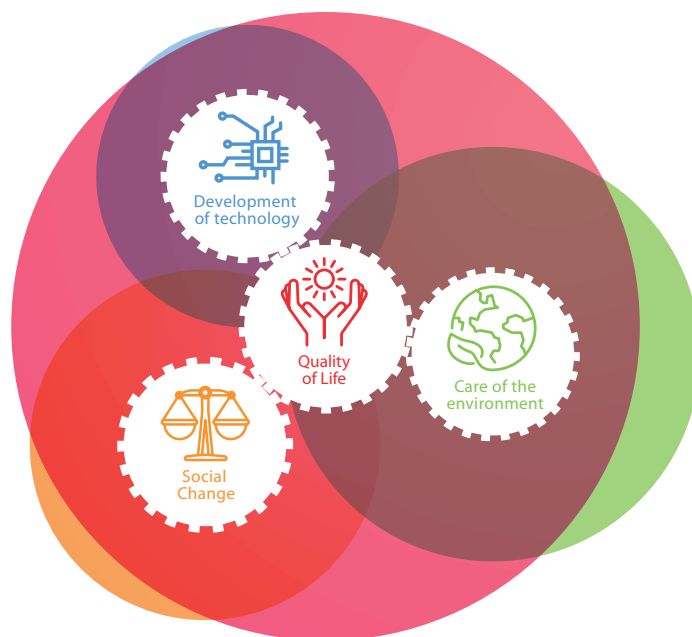



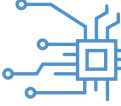


TABLE 1: PATHWAYS TO 2050 AND BEYOND

PATHWAY	CONNECTION TO RESPONDENTS’ HOPES AND CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURES	LINK TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN 2050
 QUALITY OF LIFE	THE SITUATIONS AND CONDITIONS THAT PROVIDE WELLBEING TO PEOPLE	<i>To provide opportunities for all, access to higher education must be expanded and should be affordable. What is taught in higher education and how it is taught should be adapted to individuals and driven by student choice</i>
 SOCIAL CHANGE	ECONOMIC, SOCIO-POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION THAT AFFECTS HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND CONDITIONS IN OUR WORLD	<i>Engagement in society and communities should become more integral to education/teaching and research/science. The core functions of higher education must become more relevant to societal and community needs</i>
 CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	THE ENVIRONMENT, AND ITS CARE OR DAMAGE BY HUMANS; ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH CURRENT SOCIAL CHALLENGES	<i>Sustainability should be at the core of everything higher education does through an orientation that is both global and local. Higher education has an urgent responsibility to address environmental, climatic, and other global challenges</i>
 DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY	THE RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES	<i>As we move towards a more digitalized reality, higher education has a pivotal role in researching, developing, and sharing new technological developments as well as research and innovation on their use and impact. Technology will increasingly impact teaching in higher education</i>

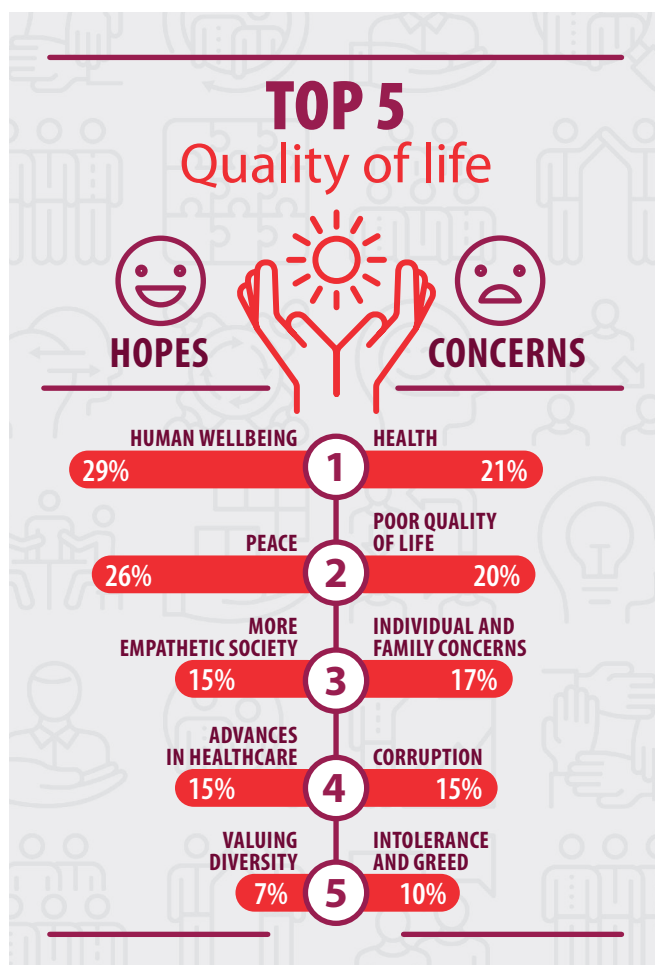
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Hopes and concerns for the futures

In this part of the report, the hopes and concerns for the futures as expressed by respondents are set out. These correspond to the four pathways to 2050 and beyond: quality of life, social change, care of the environment, and development of technology. The pathways are inter-related, each forming part of an integral whole which starts with the individual (quality of life), continues on to their social environment (social change), then to the planet (care of the environment), with technology (development of technology) interacting at all levels.

In each case, the top five hopes and concerns expressed by respondents are shown. The percentages show the frequency with which each hope or concern was mentioned as a proportion of the total number of responses per pathway. In some cases, these hopes and concerns are transversal and appear in more than one of the pathways, illustrating their interconnectedness. In other cases, the hopes and concerns are related but phrased differently depending on whether the outlook was more positive (expressed as a hope) or challenged (expressed as a concern). For example, peace was frequently cited as a hope whereas war and conflict came up as an area of concern.

1.1 Quality of life



Quality of life refers to those situations and conditions that provide wellbeing to people. Among the factors that determine the quality of life are emotional wellbeing, material wellbeing, health, family and social relationships, values, safety, and community integration. In the public consultation, 20% of respondents entered hopes for 2050 and 20% listed concerns regarding quality of life.

Respondents' greatest hope for 2050 was the desire for greater **human wellbeing** in which people have better living conditions in an environment that is harmonious and supportive. Almost all age groups indicated improved human wellbeing as their main hope. The perception of this hope varies according to gender. For men, human wellbeing focused generally on a more prosperous and inclusive world; for women, wellbeing was associated more with gender equality, access to work, non-discrimination, and education for all.

"The higher education that promotes societal welfare and individuals' wellbeing."

>60 ♀ FINLAND
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

"Good health and wellbeing, safe and secure, and sustainable future."

46-60 ♂ BHUTAN
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

Peace was also a hope included by many of the respondents, meaning not only the absence of wars but also a more egalitarian society that maintains respectful coexistence of the diversities that exist among humans and where one can live healthily and in harmony with the environment.

"Peace, and a more prosperous and equal world for all people; good environment, human living in harmony with nature."

46-60 ♀ CHINA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents also envisioned **more empathetic societies**. This implies that humanity is more aware of people and the surrounding environment, developing coexistence based on democratic and civic values and solidarity.

Respondents noted that **advances in healthcare** through research and technology would improve the protection, control, and treatment of diseases, improving people's quality of life and increasing their longevity. It was suggested that this could be achieved through better quality health care services.

"The development of health that allows greater protection against disease and the development of the poorest countries that raises the quality of life of the population."

>60 ♂ PERÚ Higher education staff, manager

Quality of life will be enhanced by **valuing diversity**. Respondents mentioned the need not only to accept but to embrace diversity within and among countries, also discussing other values that could improve the human condition.

The biggest concern mentioned with reference to quality of life was **health**. These responses focused on lack of access to and lack of sustainability of health services as well as the appearance of new diseases that could cause new pandemics or are produced by damage to the environment.

The second main concern was about the prospects for **poor quality of life**, primarily due to the impact of climate change that can increase inequalities and deteriorate human wellbeing. Women and those aged between 31 and 45 years old highlighted the effect climate change has on human life and access to education, and the feeling of vulnerability in the face of the pressure, oppression, and control that may await them in the future.

“Changed living conditions due to climate change”

31-45 ♀ SWITZERLAND
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

People’s **individual and family concerns**, mentioned most often by younger people (aged 16-30), linked concerns about whether respondents can achieve their goals and develop in the future. Furthermore, in countries that have been strongly affected by current economic and health crises, respondents’ personal concerns for the future focused more on access to health and professional achievements.

“My economic stability, my emotional stability and what might be going on in the world, its corruption.”

16-30 ♀ COLOMBIA Higher education student

Other concerns expressed by respondents were human challenges that can become systemic, relating to **corruption** and concerns about values held by others such as **intolerance and greed**. These were the principal concerns of respondents over 60 years of age, who associated these future possibilities with a negative change in values and lack of social responsibility.

1.2 Social change



Social change refers to that which is related to economic, socio-political, and cultural transformation that affects human behavior and conditions in our world. Such change may take many years to develop or may be created and implemented in a short period of time. Whereas 41% of respondents mentioned their hopes in relation to social change, even more (48%) shared their concerns or what they consider to be challenges in this area.

In the public consultation, greater **social justice** was the key hope for the 2050 horizon. This notion is based on ideas around equal opportunities and human rights, accessibility (to public services, to resources, and so on), social protection, and the possibility for each human to develop their full potential and live in a peaceful society.

The second most important hope, as part of society and its evolution, was the role of **research and innovation**. Research and innovation are related by some respondents with access to the processes and results of the research/innovation and for others represented a way to develop new knowledge focused on humanity and the environment.

“Research and discoveries for the benefit of humanity”

Age not disclosed ♀ ECUADOR Retired

“Innovation and development of [the] human mindset”

31-45 ♀ TURKEY

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Another important hope for the future was **youth leadership**, which included the expectation that young people and new generations will get involved in issues affecting them, managing to achieve a level of social engagement that improves their social, economic, and political context.

“That we will have a new generation more concerned with making necessary changes happen... people with greater understanding and care for the planet”.

31-45 ♀ BRAZIL Private sector worker in any other field

The **resolution of global challenges** was another top hope among respondents. They expressed their hope for a reduction in poverty, increased empathy in humans, lessons learned from cur-

rent experiences, and for the non-reoccurrence of the pandemic.

“Let there be peace and better education in the world.”

>60 ♀ URUGUAY Retired

“I hope that after the current pandemic, the inhabitants of this planet can become more aware of environmental and personal health care.”

31-45 ♂ ARGENTINA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents also hoped that people will show **greater integrity** in the futures, acting honestly and upholding their principles while focusing on an integrated and more supportive society.

“May humanity overcome the political chaos that subjects us to unnecessary hardship and discrimination, [and] may our children be better people with less extractive values.”

31-45 ♀ BOLIVIA Private sector worker in any other field

The main concern of respondents in relation to social change was that of **social inequalities**, which also incorporated concerns about inequity and lack of social justice. This points to fears that social gaps and inequalities, discrimination, polarization, asymmetries, and deeper ethnicity-based differences may not only persist but might deepen.

“That there is still an equal or greater gap between rich and poor sectors.”

46-60 ♂ EL SALVADOR

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

The second main concern regarding social change was **economic and resource challenges**. Here, respondents included future economic situations, or

economic instability related to the lack of access to social and even natural resources.

“The global south economies will be grappling with more socioeconomic hardships, exploitation, and violence.”

31-45 ♂ UGANDA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

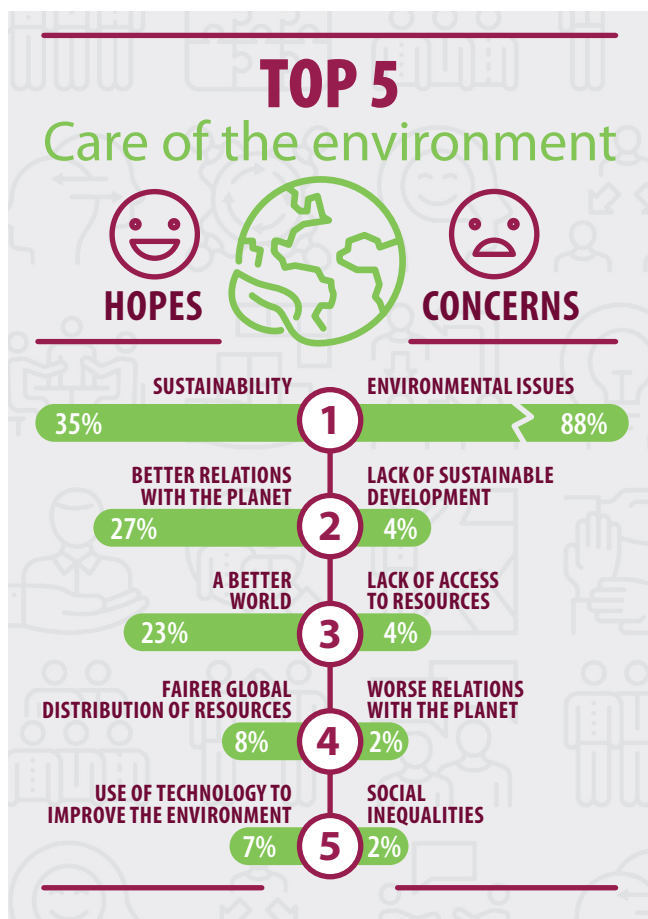
Another major future challenge was **war and conflicts**, mentioned equally by both male and female respondents who expressed concerns about a future without peace and the different ways this is likely to impact our world, depending on location and colonial history.

“Political instability, war, insecurity”

31-45 ♂ MALI
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

Concerns about **poverty** related to futures where globalization and economic models around the world could affect people and their stability and **diminished international relations** mean that countries could mistreat other countries or treat other populations with intolerance causing instability, with the proliferation of authoritarian or corrupt governments further polarizing populations.

1.3 Care of the environment



The environment, and its care or damage by humans, has become one of the world’s main points of focus in recent years. It has also become more common for people to relate current social challenges to the care of the environment. In the public consultation, 14% of respondents related their hopes to environmental goals, whereas almost double that number (26%) addressed environmental concerns.

It seems that respondents felt that there is a connection between the degradation of the general state of the environment, and the current problems being experienced by the most vulnerable populations. Therefore, most responses regarding hopes for the environment were broadly expressed through the main hope for **sustainability**.

“Humanity’s new-found awareness of its responsibility for the environment, social justice and sustainable development”

46-60 ♀ COLOMBIA Higher education staff, manager

People were hopeful that with better care of the environment, life for those who experience firsthand the consequences of natural disasters, for example, will improve as fewer disasters caused by climate change will harm them. This connected with respondents' hope for **better relations with the planet**.

Respondents also hoped for **a better world** which many attributed to advances in technology that will help preserve the planet and provide better living conditions for future generations. Tools like medicine, Indigenous knowledge, science, and education, already exist, but the hope was that their focus will shift towards a more ecological approach to achieve sustainability.

"We can utilize more advanced technology to learn new things and the environment of the earth will be protected well."

16-30 ♀ CHINA

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

Respondents expressed expectations for **fairer global distribution of resources**. For some, this would mean action being taken by the richest countries in the world, as people see them and their governments as responsible for today's issues. This too affects the need to care for the environment.

"There will be no International inequality, i.e., a kind of economic inequality, the difference in the level of wellbeing between citizens of different states and countries."

46-60 ♀ KAZAKHSTAN Higher education staff, manager

When discussing care of the environment, the **use of technology to improve the environment** was included by respondents as a hope for the futures. This was discussed in the call for clean or renewable energy development, as well as generally, in the context of hopes that technology will be harnessed for environmental good.

Concerns labelled as care of the environment were often interconnected. A large majority of

concerns were broadly expressed as fears about **environmental issues**. More specific responses linked concerns about the **lack of sustainable development**, which also tied in with other concerns about the **lack of access to resources**.

"Our rapidly deteriorating earthly environment, and the continued difficulties with socioemotional development and thus with the ability to dialogue"

46-60 ♀ CHILE

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

"Climate change, environment pollution, lack of drinking water, destruction of wildlife, increase in inequality."

31-45 ♀ HUNGARY

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

There was also a clear concern that **worse relations with the planet** we live on may bring into question whether Earth can sustain human life. These kinds of concerns, which were once thought of as extreme or radical, are now central.

"I hope the humans can reach more goals of sustainable matters, like good education, climate change solutions and coping with global cultural young generational change."

46-60 ♀ GERMANY School teacher, staff, manager

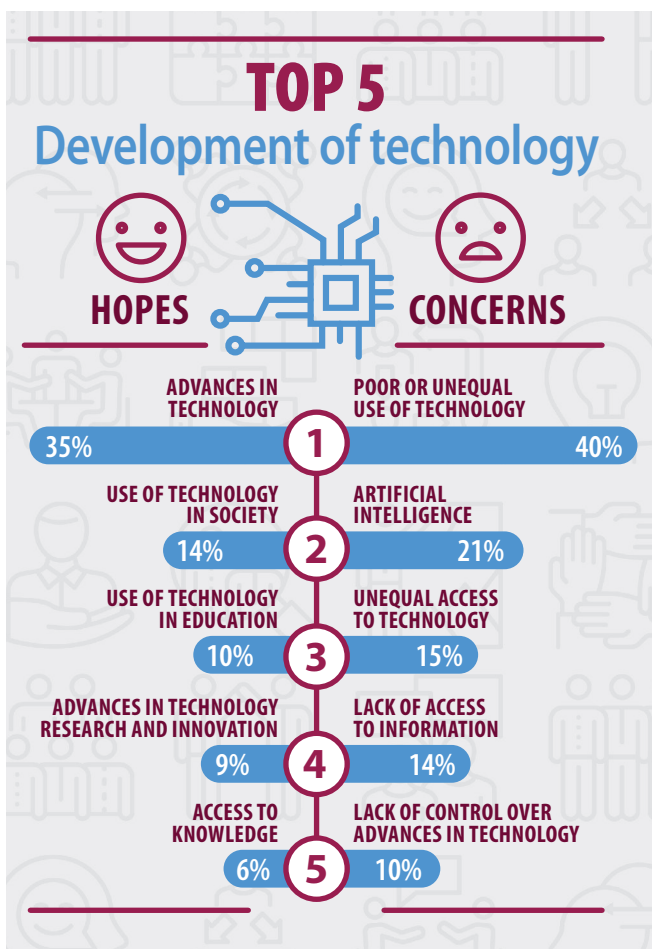
The concern that **social inequalities** may persist for those requiring proper living conditions and who currently cannot provide it for themselves and good health for all, was almost palpable in the responses when connected to care of the environment.

"Global environmental conditions and people's quality of life. Contrary to what has been proposed, inequalities appear to have increased in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic."

31-45 ♀ ECUADOR

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

1.4 Development of technology



The reciprocal relationship between the rapid development of technology and social, economic, and environmental changes worldwide are becoming clearer and increasingly questioned. In this public consultation, 25% of the total number of respondents identified hopes related to the development of technology while 7% had concerns regarding this topic.

When respondents mentioned technology, they often did so in general terms, simply using the word ‘technology’ as either their main hope or concern for their future. The intersection of this pathway with the other pathways was also apparent in the responses. In general, respondents had more positive than negative views on technology. Of all the responses, technology-related topics appeared 323 times for the question on hopes⁴, and just 87 times in the question on concerns.

The main hope expressed by respondents was that the rapid **advances in technology** seen in recent decades will continue. This could potentially be linked to the same kinds of data-intensive technology as are happening today, such as big data and machine learning related to artificial intelligence.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, technology has become even more important as the physical restrictions of the lockdown period motivated further digitalization across all sectors, changing how society operates. Respondents hoped that the **use of technology in society** will develop positively in the future, and not only as a response to pandemics or crises.

“All disciplines and professions collaborating to create a better future, abandoning old practices that are part of the problem.”

46-60 ♀ AUSTRALIA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

In addition to its impact on society, respondents identified the **use of technology in education** and **advances in technology research and innovation** as key aspects to be considered in the next 30 years. Together with their insights on the use of technology in society, respondents expected technology to have more impact on research, the labor market, the development of new abilities, and institutional change, as well as on their own lives.

“Technologically driven and addressing humanity’s needs and challenges”

31-45 ♂ ZIMBABWE Unemployed

“Higher education should contain concepts that overcome the existing situation of social tension and rebuild the digital environment for human development”

>60 ♀ KYRGYZSTAN
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

⁴ Some respondents mentioned more than one hope related to technology which were coded separately.

“Advanced technology which will further improve connectivity and access to education. Improved pharmaceutical research and availability of medicine that will improve the health and longevity of people.”

31-45 ♀ CHINA Higher education student

Connected to ideas about the role of technology in improving connectivity, respondents also listed **access to knowledge** as a hope for the futures. Respondents hoped for better and/or uncensored access to information through the Internet and for more equity in how information and knowledge is accessed and shared.

“Equitable access for all citizens of the world to knowledge and means of communication through digital technology.”

46-60 ♂ NIGER
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Paradoxically, many of the hopes about technology were also concerns. Countering the hopes about the use of technology in society and education were fears about **poor or unequal use of technology** in the futures. Also, while respondents expected advances in technology to continue, **artificial intelligence** was highlighted as a concern, an acknowledgement of the uncertainties about the implications it could have for people’s lives.

“The emerging interactions of [hu]man and environment, and [hu]man and machines; whether [we] will continue to be in control of the future in the face of machines (Robots) or if the environment will still contain the essentials to sustain life.”

46-60 SIERRA LEONE
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

The public consultation showed how technology itself is developing and integrating differently in society as a result of regional variations. For ex-

ample, respondents in places currently leading in new technologies such as North America, Europe and China were less likely to mention concerns about **unequal access to technology** or the **lack of access to information** as future issues.

In general, although respondents indicated that technology could continue to support a transition towards a more digitalized society and is expected to be at the forefront of future developments, serious concerns were raised about **lack of control over advances in technology**. These are the potentially unintended consequences or ethical issues linked to how technology functions.

“Disproportionate and ill-intentioned technological developments.”

46-60 ♀ DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

1.5 Summary

Respondents’ hopes and concerns for the futures illustrated the four main pathways identified in this public consultation through broader individual, societal and planetary perspectives. These pathways – quality of life, social change, care of the environment and the development of technology – were derived from the hopes expressed for human wellbeing, peace, social justice with research and innovation, sustainability, and advances in the use of and research on technology. They were also manifested as issues that worry people for the futures, from health concerns, poor quality of life, continuity of social inequalities and inequity, war and conflict, the degradation of the environment to unethical uses of technology.

Having set out the above scenarios within the four pathways, the next part of the report turns to the role that these factors could play in shaping higher education as we look towards 2050.

2

Higher education in 2050

This part of the report connects the pathways to 2050 and beyond to respondents' visions for higher education by offering more detailed insights on the different roles that higher education could play and the changes that might need to be made to achieve this. It should be recalled that the public consultation was designed to encourage respondents to think optimistically about the futures, and this hopefulness imbues many of the sections that follow.

This part is organized into four themes representing the main sets of ideas and suggestions of respondents. Each theme has several headings; the titles of the headings are quotes from the public consultation, further showcasing the voices of respondents that are integral to this work.

The key themes for higher education in 2050 begin with **higher education for all**, given that issues relating to access and inclusion were the most frequently mentioned, representing 30% of the total responses to the consultation's questions on higher education. Topics relating to students were also high on respondents' agendas, with 28% of responses linked to the idea that higher education futures can be **student-centered**. 22% of responses were related to ways to support the education and research functions of higher education and are grouped under the theme of the **organization of knowledge**. Finally, 20% of responses were associated with how higher education could be more responsive and **connected at multiple levels** to society, communities, and the planet.

2.1 Higher education for all

"Available and affordable to all"

Across age groups, gender identities, professions, and world regions, there was consensus among respondents that becoming more inclusive and open to all are the most important ways in which higher education in 2050 could contrib-

ute to better futures. This focus on access and inclusion generated more than twice as much attention as any other topic.

"If higher education is available and affordable to all, everyone could have a better future in 2050."

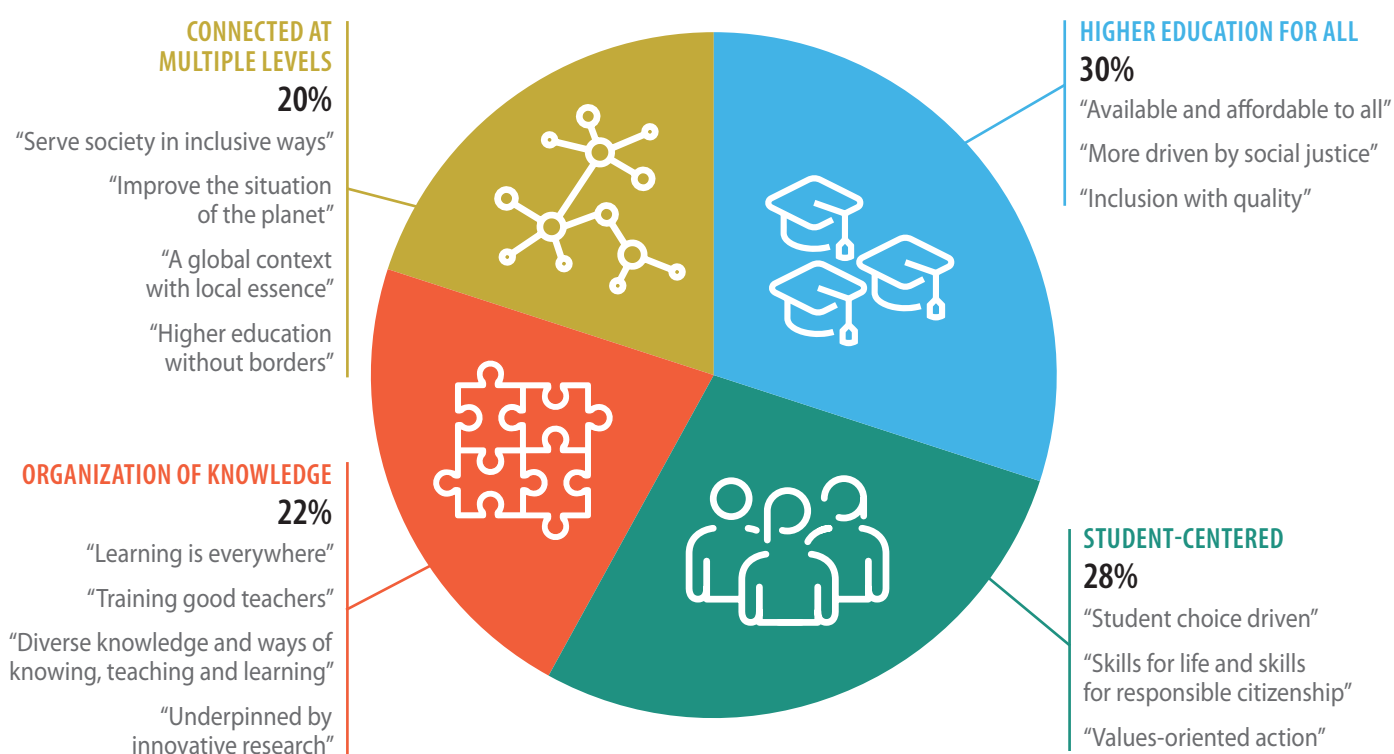
46-60 ♀ NAMIBIA Unemployed

The message from respondents was clear: higher education plays a crucial role in individual empowerment, community development, societal progress, and global cohesion. As more people graduate from higher education, the higher level of education in societies will make sustainable development more attainable.

"When it's [higher education] available to all and allows every individual to bring their potential into full play, more people will be able to make contributions, and very importantly, make informed decisions that are good for themselves and the community in general!"

46-60 ♀ CHINA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

TABLE 2: KEY THEMES RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN 2050



“Thanks to extensive and available higher education, everyone would enjoy the joy in sharing knowledge.”

31-45 ♀ ITALY

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

Respondents pointed out that technology can facilitate the much-needed efforts to further open access to higher education. This will be possible due to new scientific and technological advances that automate the translation of books and learning materials, better equipped laboratories, and improved global interconnectivity. However, it is important to note that technology cannot act alone, and access to higher education will also be shaped by changes in curricula, policies, and other innovations.

“Technology provides support to integrate the most vulnerable human beings into the mainstream of higher education”

31-45 ♂ THAILAND

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“More equal opportunities with the use of technologies”

>60 ♂ BANGLADESH Retired

Responses point out that the democratization of higher education by expanding access to it would shape higher education institutions as well as knowledge itself, which is the key outcome of higher education.

“Inclusive, democratic and emancipatory access for all.”

46-60 ♂ BRAZIL

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Only 15% of the responses relating to access to higher education focused on how current financial barriers could be lifted to expand the opportunities provided by higher education. There were calls from respondents to make higher education completely free of charge as well as suggestions to make higher education more affordable.

“Opportunities should be given to all students. In Sri Lanka now only 2% of students get free higher education. Around 10% get higher education in other ways.”

>60 ♂ SRI LANKA Retired

Respondents said that this outcome could be achieved within domestic public policy frameworks through government subsidies, reductions or caps on tuition fees, and targeted support for certain groups such as those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The cost of higher education could also be reduced by making greater use of a range of study modalities, including online and distance learning.

“It [higher education] can be conducted remotely with a lower price. Therefore, the threshold of acquiring advanced knowledge will be lowered, making more people eligible to study and making contributions to the globe by utilizing the knowledge they have acquired from higher education.”

16-30 ♂ CHINA Higher education student

Respondents pointed out that addressing the issue of funding higher education is not just a local concern, but one that requires greater global solidarity. Such alliances would not replicate historic international inequalities but rather would actively seek ways to overcome them.

“Build a common thinking that includes the most democratic tendencies on higher education and thinking about the existence of funds to support countries and institutions, which help overcome existing imbalances.”

46-60 ♂ CUBA

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

According to the responses, the current global trends of restricted access are not in the interests of the individual and society. To change this model, a shift in focus from external forces to humans and the planet will be required. Expanded access to higher education will reinforce human values

such as peace, justice, and dignity and improve the world's welfare because educated people are likely to be more capable of building inclusive and empathetic systems.

"More driven by social justice"

Looking ahead to 2050, the benefits of higher education could be more equally available within states and across borders, led by principles of social justice such as access to resources, participation, diversity, inclusivity, and human rights.

Across societies, higher education is seen as a mechanism to address today's inequities, including differences within populations based on social group and economic standing, and urban/rural divides that have typically disadvantaged those in remote communities.

GROUPS MENTIONED BY RESPONDENTS WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM MORE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

- GENDER
- FAITH
- ETHNICITY
- RURAL COMMUNITIES
- ECONOMICALLY OR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED
- DISABLED
- REFUGEES
- THOSE LIVING IN CONFLICT

"By breaking down elitist structures and being accessible to everyone, and by allowing a diversity of topics, resources, staff, faculty, and being more driven by social justice."

46-60 ♀ QATAR
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents emphasized the importance of higher education being equitable, universal, inclusive for all social classes, and nurtured by the diversity and interculturality of knowledge systems. Many points of view converged on the fact that the transformative capacity of higher educa-

tion can be enhanced if equitable access is guaranteed and adapted to the needs of populations. This will lead to a more just society.

"Equitable, inclusive, flexible, at the service of each person's human, spiritual, artistic, emotional, social development."

31-45 ♂ CHILE
Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

Respondents recognize that a democratic, equitable, and inclusive approach requires taking into consideration the needs of all, including remote and rural populations. The strengthening of hybrid education is one of the models most indicated for increased access. To this end, respondents recommended that policymakers, advocacy bodies, and higher education institutions focus on policies that make access more equitable. This was advocated by respondents as an end in itself, both because it is the right thing to do, and because of the impact it could have on bringing an end to poverty.

"Flexible education that is adapted to different regions, with quality and relevance, enshrined as a human right [and] as a public good and not exclusively for those who can afford it."

31-45 ♂ URUGUAY
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

"Giving access to higher education to populations that have historically been disadvantaged by the education system and unequitable access to resources, would open up opportunities for many people and hopefully begin to break the cycle of poverty."

31-45 ♀ CANADA School teacher, staff, manager

Respondents also showed how enhanced open access to higher education should be seen through a globally transformative social justice lens. Opening up access to higher education is the first part of a bigger puzzle. Equity will also

be achieved by ensuring that facilities and services are designed to support the success of all students, especially those who have previously been marginalized from higher education. For example, those with physical disabilities will have better opportunities for achievement with modifications to the campus and the integration of technology.

“More access for disadvantaged people”

46-60 ♂ NEW ZEALAND

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Ensuring all facilities and schools have disability access such as wheelchair access, computers and smartboards can increase opportunities for those with disabilities”

31-45 ♀ SOUTH AFRICA Higher education student

“Inclusion with quality”

Respondents said that better access to higher education and greater equity in the future go hand in hand with improved quality. Higher education in 2050 is not only about making learning opportunities available to more students, but also about insisting on the need to provide high standard educational experiences and support services to prepare students for future realities.

“Working for inclusion with quality throughout the education system, guaranteeing freedom and free expression, strengthening autonomy and democracy, preventing institutions from being co-opted by groups that impose their interests and thinking.”

>60 ♂ ARGENTINA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

For most respondents who linked inclusion with quality higher education, this was a general aspiration for higher education – to achieve the combination of quality (which may have different connotations in diverse contexts) and inclusion.

“If more people have access to quality higher education, they can reach their potential and contribute to solve the issues that the world will face in 2050.”

31-45 ♀ UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Higher education student

Some respondents gave more specific examples of how quality could be improved, such as aligning courses to identified quality assurance standards that are relevant to and defined by national, regional and/or international qualification frameworks for higher education credentials. This would mean adjusting teaching and integrating transformative technologies into the classroom.

“With all courses and teaching programs based on regional and international quality standards.”

46-60 ♀ MOZAMBIQUE

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

For respondents, quality also means that the teaching and learning models are kept up-to-date and able to manage the constant dynamic changes generated by societies and globalization processes.

“It must be of high quality, to cope with continuous change and development.”

16-30 ♀ PERU Higher education student

Respondents’ discussions on quality also related to higher education’s role in improving the quality of learning outcomes: the standards that graduates take with them into their post-higher education journeys, and the overall quality of life in society.

“Learning in higher education itself will not be a premium in society. The quality of outcomes will become more important.”

31-45 ♂ JAPAN

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

2.2 Student-centered

“Student choice-driven”

Nearly 50% of the responses in the public consultation addressed one key stakeholder of higher education – students. Respondents stressed the importance of higher education being flexible and personalized, responding to a student’s capacities, interests, and needs. As noted by respondents, this starts with an adequate choice of courses, training, and other opportunities within one higher education institution and extends to scenarios in which students can choose options from multiple higher education institutions based on their own choices.

“Student choice-driven - flexible, stackable education of the highest quality for lifelong learning.”

46-60 ♀ MALAYSIA Higher education staff, manager

“Every higher education institution can provide its most advanced and specialized educational resources. Every student can choose different educational resources from different higher education institutions based on his/her own needs. In such way, students can form his/her own study plan and make ‘personalized growth’ a reality.”

46-60 ♀ CHINA Higher education staff, manager

Respondents proposed that personalization involves the adoption of interdisciplinary and/or cross-disciplinary approaches that provide students not only with choice but also with both depth and breadth in academic offerings.

“More customized for each student’s capacity and potential. Students can have more chances to learn the cross-disciplinary courses, developing himself in a various way”

16-30 ♀ CHINA Higher education student

A proposed model for flexible learning is not only demanding on future higher education systems globally but also on industry and more so on students, since they are the ones deciding what they

want. At the same time, higher education creates the space in which students can learn and share their knowledge.

“Give students time to make their own discoveries and share them”

31-45 ♂ BURUNDI

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

A clear message from the consultation is that for higher education to be more student choice-driven, responsibility lies not only with students but with all stakeholders in higher education. The aim is to reach a higher purpose through the development of students.

“In the better formation of future leaders, future thinkers, researchers, and minds that will think towards the betterment of the world in their own way.”

16-30 ♂ SPAIN Higher education student

“Skills for life and skills for responsible citizenship”

The role of higher education in developing students’ skills was a recurring theme among respondents. In the context of a global vision, their suggestions focused on the ways that higher education can cultivate citizenship that is both responsible and sustainable. Citizenship does not restrict itself within a nation-state but rather connects all humans; higher education has a role in promoting exchanges and removing barriers to facilitate such exchanges.

“By developing **skills for life** (not just professional ones) **and skills for responsible citizenship** (including fighting against climate change)”

31-45 ♀ ROMANIA Higher education staff, manager

“By providing **qualified, skillful, committed, and caring citizens.**”

>60 ♀ PALESTINE Higher education staff, manager

Respondents emphasized that graduates will become critical citizens, unafraid to challenge the status quo. Their inclination will be towards society, nature, and wellbeing.

“Practical skills linked with cultural roots and enhancing skills with respect and care for nature.”

16-30 ♀ NEPAL Higher education student

For those respondents who agreed on the need for the provision of skills and/or skills training, such future skills were often related to the workforce, employment, or local and global development from a social, cultural, environmental, and economic perspective.

“Inserting content that allows the student to develop skills and abilities to work in the market, contributing to local socioeconomic development.”

31-45 ♀ BRAZIL
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Based on competencies, practice, directed towards the professions and trades that are needed, of quality, not so long, highly permeated in values and soft skills.”

46-60 ♀ PANAMA Higher education student

In those cases where the local context is diverse, there are naturally different opinions as to which skills are needed and how skills should be practiced. This points to the importance of higher education being able to identify in-demand and locally relevant skills.

“Constantly doing needs assessments to see what the key skills of the time are.”

31-45 ♀ JAMAICA School teacher, staff, manager

And, while there was agreement among respondents that students should have more opportunities to apply their learning in practical ways, caution was encouraged when it comes to assessing the results of students' engagement in the wider world. The current system of examination and

grades may not continue to be the most appropriate way to gauge students' learning.

“Motivating and giving opportunities to students from undergraduate (2nd cycle onwards) to get internships and / or pre-professional practices. This is to see the performance of the students in the field, in addition to trying to reduce the filters (grades), since these are not a good indicator of the professional performance of the students.”

16-30 ♀ PERU Unemployed

“Values-oriented action”

While most respondents discussed the continuing need for higher education to support students' skill development, some argued that it would be more important for higher education to address other areas of student development.

“We do not need more ‘skills’ in the future, but more critical thinking, more empathy, more values-oriented action.”

31-45 ♂ ROMANIA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

The concept of values-oriented action recurs in many of the responses suggesting ways in which higher education can be a pillar for students' awareness and lifelong application.

“Higher education institutions must focus not only on skills and knowledge-based competences, but also about humanity, social responsibility, upbringing [nurturing]”

31-45 ♂ TAJIKISTAN Higher education staff, manager

“Higher education can be shaped as a public good and as a driver of social and economic growth. Values such as respect, empathy, equality, and solidarity should be at the core of future higher education institutions and their missions. Also, climate change and violent extremism can be tackled if we have viable and strong higher education systems and institutions.”

31-45 ♀ CAMEROON
Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

“Higher education must above all train students to think for themselves, to be aware of diversity, to be able and willing to engage in dialogue across cultures and identities, and to be able to apply their knowledge/learning (in whatever field) for the common good.”

CANADA

Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

Other respondents advocated for a different kind of approach to student development altogether. In this line of thinking, attributes that have been overlooked in some scenarios, but which are deeply rooted in the human experience – personal integrity, doing things by hand, living within the means of one’s environment – will re-emerge as the cycle of human history turns towards 2050. This embodiment of values within higher education incorporates human development beyond conventional knowledge sharing.

“Reconnecting with basics, i.e., your word is your honor, integrity, hand skills, learn to be satisfied with less.”

31-45 ♀ SOUTH AFRICA

Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

“Education will go back to ‘originality’ – for development of people, for advancement of mankind, and for harmony of human and nature.”

46-60 ♀ CHINA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

2.3 Organization of knowledge

“Learning is everywhere”

For respondents, the concept that learning occurs everywhere translated into the necessity of deploying multiple modalities to ensure that learning is not just everywhere but can happen at any time. A principle for digitalized higher education is that higher education should offer what is needed, regardless of whether it is delivered online or offline and whether it is a formal degree program or informal learning.

“Learning is everywhere.”

31-45 ♂ CHINA Higher education student

Respondents envisaged future learning to be driven by greater personalization and to continue even after a particular course or program ends, with systems and offerings that are flexible, interdisciplinary, accessible, and lifelong.

“Short courses that teach practical skills. So people do not graduate at 22 and not go back to study but can learn things all their lives and change the course of what they want to do and what the world demands as time passes.”

16-30 ♀ COLOMBIA Higher education student

Besides learning materials, respondents mentioned digital learning and the use of innovative technology to widely facilitate distance learning activities.

“Flexible, online and competency-based.”

31-45 ♂ VANUATU Higher education staff, manager

Respondents envisioned expanding access to higher education using digital modalities, which will provide new ways to generate other curricula and programs worldwide. As respondents noted, those engaging in higher education in 2050 will have experienced a world where technology and connectivity are taken for granted, although concerns remained that it may still not be universally accessible by then.

[My main concern for 2050 is] “Remote areas getting access to electricity”

31-45 ♂ GHANA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“By the year 2050, both teachers and students will be digital natives, so they will be able to design tools that facilitate learning, allowing access to knowledge for everyone, anywhere.”

46-60 ♀ CUBA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Faced with this scenario, respondents said that higher education must adapt teaching to stimulate the teaching-learning process. Efforts to ensure that connectivity and knowledge are accessible for all should be intensified.

In this context, however, respondents expressed a clear preference for mixed educational models that benefit from the best of all types of modalities. Recognizing the multiple global contexts and pathways to the future, the diversification of educational models will be essential. This could entail continuing the in-person model that currently prevails, switching long-term to a completely online model, or developing more blended models that mix in-person and online.

“Hybrid education: online, blended, and face-to-face.”

>60 ♂ JORDAN

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Remote is for general knowledge and face-to-face for practice and social contact.”

31-45 ♀ MEXICO

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

The key, as suggested by respondents, is to accept different formats of learning. These may be set out directly by higher education but could also be put together by students who take greater control of their own paths and decide what to do or what their personal interests are which help them to become better humans and professionals.

“Full-time, part-time, adult education, online education and other various forms of education should all be accepted and recognized with value by employers.”

16-30 ♂ CHINA Higher education student

“Training good teachers”

Rather than the traditional teacher⁵, respondents indicated that the teaching and learning processes will require a companion. In this sense teachers should commit to different values that outline the teaching mission, such as respect, citizenship, responsibility, empathy, ethics, innovation, and a creative way to approach education to make the students the protagonist of their own learning and knowledge.

“Training good teachers: professors/teachers who do not limit themselves to teaching technical knowledge, but values; who develop the potential of their students, help them discover what talents they possess and develop them in the best way and for a more caring and just humanity with more wisdom and not so much technicality.”

46-60 ♀ ARGENTINA Higher education staff, manager

Respondents recommended that higher education teachers should have more freedom to choose the way the courses are taught, without forgetting the importance of student feedback and input.

“The top-down control of professors and teachers and university administrative must be dismantled and become horizontal spaces of learning and creating knowledge and open sharing of knowledge.”

>60 ♀ PAKISTAN

Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

To complement this vision, respondents pointed out that teacher development should be more holistic, supporting teacher education through curiosity, values, research, proactivity, having in mind a more multicultural world that connects with other cultures and beliefs in placing sustainable learning as a transversal value.

5 By teacher, we refer collectively to higher education lecturers, professors, and other teaching staff

“The teaching model has to adapt to global societies and spaces in need of an understanding that, while quality must be assured and maintained, “quality” is neither oppressive nor a preventative barrier.”

46-60 ♂ JAMAICA Higher education staff, manager

In turn, respondents said that teachers should apply more practical methodologies whereby, in addition to theory and method, practice is also taught. And in this process, incorporating creative ways to teach constitutes an essential tool to facilitating access to knowledge through research.

“[Teachers should have] the motto “Studying does not have to be boring.”

31-45 ♀ PERU

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents would like to see teachers taking advantage of the increasing shift in technology in the years to come. This implies innovative ways of teaching both inside the classroom and through online classes. In this regard, respondents highlighted the importance of AI and big data to provide valuable inputs for decision-making at all levels of education.

“More pedagogical that includes much more technology (technology recognised so far), with artificial intelligence and robots at our disposal.”

31-45 ♀ BRAZIL Private sector worker in any other field

Respondents are of the view that teaching will support students in the acquisition of knowledge and skills, multi-disciplinary studies, and draw on Indigenous and other ways of knowing to inculcate respect for the environment and critical understanding of the world.

“Integral, which encompasses new teaching models both academic, scientific and human. Social and climatological awareness.”

46-60 ♀ EL SALVADOR

Private sector worker in a field related to higher education/
Latin America and the Caribbean

“Diverse knowledge and ways of knowing, teaching and learning”

Respondents said that higher education can contribute to better futures for all in 2050 by addressing the curriculum – the content of what is taught and learned – as well as how forms of knowledge are made available and whose knowledge is prioritized. Respondents emphasized the need to address the persistence of colonial and hegemonic knowledge. Such forms of knowledge not only emphasize particular interests but undermine the common good.

“Free for all, available for all and less Eurocentric. Diverse knowledge and ways of knowing, teaching, and learning would be present. The international academic knowledge would not be based on the US-Europe center. Translation and availability of production from different countries should be vast.”

31-45 ♀ BRAZIL Higher education student

[Higher education should be] “Experimental, critical, diverse, dialogic, transformative, flexible, and sustainable.”

31-45 ♀ VENEZUELA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents stressed the need for the curriculum to be adapted to local and global needs, without forgetting the interactions between the different disciplines and the need to promote critical human-centered thinking.

“Updating the curriculum: reviewing gender, race and class biases that intervene in collective knowledge construction. Approaching their communities proactively, through the creation and diffusion of production and their own, promoting democratic coexistence in their communities, encouraging young people to integrate their communities.”

16-30 ♀ ARGENTINA School teacher, staff, manager

Respondents also emphasized that the curriculum of the future should be enhanced by new technologies and technological developments, adopted

in recognition of their importance, rather than simply because technology is seen as a panacea.

“Graduate academic programs that critically integrate transforming technologies, such as artificial, analytical, automation and robotic intelligence, nanotechnologies, Internet of things, new renewable energies, etc.”

>60 ♂ FRANCE

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents advocated for action to be taken to ensure open access and wide availability of sources and materials. Knowledge will not be a commodity but available to all. Removing knowledge from behind paywalls could encourage innovation and experimentation and support equitable access to discoveries.

“Providing and generating accessible knowledge.”

46-60 ♀ ANDORRA

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

According to respondents, readily available knowledge could combat some of today’s problems of misinformation and help to prevent the spread of disinformation. It could increase trust in scientific discoveries and promote the importance of the arts and humanities, as all of today’s educational disciplines have a role to play in resolving global and local challenges.

“Knowledge is power and if it is truly democratic and global, it will allow us to find faster and more localized solutions to the problems of the moment.”

31-45 ♂ SPAIN Private sector worker in any other field

“Underpinned by innovative research”

Innovation is not limited to science and technology but also encompasses innovative research, critical thinking, approaches, implementation and many more aspects that take place within the space of

higher education. Respondents affirmed that research promotes innovation and that research itself can be innovative. Higher education’s role in the futures is to promote this in multiple ways.

“More equitable with a diverse range of courses that prepare students for a globalized world in the 21st century underpinned by innovative research.”

>60 ♀ UNITED KINGDOM

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents recognized that research and innovation can impact on society and advanced a new mission for higher education – to serve society in inclusive ways.

“Pay greater attention to research in key sectors of social, political and economic life, such as the issues of food production for all, human rights and the strengthening of democracy, and environmental protection.”

31-45 ♂ ANGOLA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents were of the opinion that research and innovation should be better supported and suggested that this support should be provided by governments.

“Institutional support on infrastructure and resources. Promotion of university researchers. Participation of teachers in development programs set by the government.”

31-45 ♀ MADAGASCAR

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

Innovation – whether in science, research, or otherwise – should, like higher education itself, be responsive and responsible, accessible, and collaborative.

“Science with tenderness! Entrepreneurship, responsibility, feelings.”

>60 ♀ CUBA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“It should be founded on the premise of quality, research based in solving real social economic challenges and not just academic discourse. Talents and innovations ought to be promoted highly.”

31-45 ♂ MALAWI

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

“HE carries research with actions embedded so that problems can be solved by the researchers and practitioners together.”

46-60 ♂ PAKISTAN

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

While there was widespread acceptance of the importance of science and technology for future higher education, respondents also noted the importance of balancing innovations in this field with the concept of responsible citizenship.

“Keep the balance between the development of SciTech and global civic awareness.”

31-45 ♂ CHINA Higher education student

2.4 Connected at multiple levels

“Serve society in inclusive ways”

An important message emerging from the public consultation was the desire to (re)connect higher education with the societies and communities that surround it. This message came through clearly when respondents described how they see the purpose of higher education in 2050 and in their reiteration of the need for greater relevance in the core functions of higher education.

In essence, respondents felt that higher education should be of service to society. For respondents who focused on institutional change, service to society should be inclusive, not only to inform socio-economic development but for the benefit of humankind.

“We need to restore the role of university to serve society in inclusive ways, but this does not mean to take a technocratic view. There is a need to release higher education from the functionalist trap so that the university fulfills its duty as a space of informed citizenship.”

31-45 ♀ UNITED KINGDOM

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

To be of service to society, respondents said that higher education must be capable of solving complex problems, of addressing and overcoming inequities and of ensuring good quality of academic offerings.

“Inclusive and of high academic quality, with a view on the needs of society.”

>60 ♂ NETHERLANDS

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents pointed out that higher education is often very theoretical, yet when students graduate, they find themselves in a world of work that demands immediate know-how. Students should be prepared for the ‘real world’ and higher education can facilitate this process through various motivational models.

The idea of ‘doing it for real’ came through clearly as a message for the future. This relates both in terms of how students are prepared as well as the practicality of what is being brought to the attention of students.

The clear insistence of respondents on greater relevance points to a perceived disconnect between what higher education does and how this meets the current and future needs of the communities around it. In other words, according to the public consultation, everything that higher education does should be of service to society and communities. This applies to local, national, regional, and global levels, with higher education institutions potentially focusing on a community at a particular level depending on their remit.

HIGHER EDUCATION “DOING IT FOR REAL” IN THE FUTURE

“Open academia to **REALITY**, application; less knowledge and much more know-how.”

46-60 ♀ SPAIN

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Real interaction with the social, business, cultural, health, economic, educational and other environments. Being less schooled, more practical and with a focus on **REAL** entrepreneurship.”

46-60 ♀ ECUADOR

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Construction of **REAL** global talents.”

16-30 ♂ CHINA School student

“A **REAL** chance for critical thinking and self-reflection.”

31-45 ♀ COSTA RICA Higher education student

“More focused on the **REAL** training needs of young people.”

46-60 ♀ GABON

Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

“[Higher education] “could contribute if adopted to the **REALITY** of life.”

46-60 ♂ COMOROS

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

“Motivate students to engage in **REAL LIFE** problem solving.”

31-45 ♂ CHINA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Practical, experiential, and **REAL.**”

16-30 ♂ EL SALVADOR

Private sector worker in any other field

“Quality education that promotes universal human values and responds to the real needs of populations for sustainable development.”

46-60 ♂ MOROCCO

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

The responses suggested that embedding higher education in the service of society goes hand in hand with other changes which will make it more relevant, whether this is access to higher education or the world of work.

“Free for all, flexible and completely decompartmentalized, oriented towards research and innovation; completely open to the world of work and the world in general, serving the community and the world.”

31-45 ♀ LEBANON

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

“Improve the situation of the planet”

The strengths of today’s higher education through its contributions to knowledge creation and sharing can

be further leveraged into the futures to confront major global issues. Climate change and environmental concerns were a priority area for respondents; other global challenges mentioned included demographic changes and the effects of extreme poverty.

“Intelligence and knowledge must be used to improve the situation of the planet.”

31-45 ♀ PERU

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents envisioned higher education’s resources being used to advocate for policies that contribute to sustainability and reduce the impact of climate change. Instead of the current emphasis on efficiency, higher education institutions would be valued for their focus on ecological responses.

“Much more focused on meeting the demand of the local societies that support them, with greater concern for environmental care.”

31-45 ♂ ARGENTINA

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

“More engaged in finding solutions to the sustainability challenges.”

>60 ♂ GREECE

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents saw sustainability guiding all decision-making and at the core of what is taught and researched. Through higher education, graduates will be empowered to take their own actions in tackling global challenges.

“I would like higher education to contribute more to reorient our mode of development to sustainability and equity, which requires higher education research, teaching, and services to refocus on sustainable development of our planet and all people.”

31-45 ♀ CHINA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Higher education’s responsibility to cultivate responsible and sustainable citizens does not start and end with students but can be transferred to the general population. As respondents noted, this could be done, for example, by raising public awareness of our interconnectedness and of what can be done to overcome disparities and challenges that affect different places in different ways.

“Higher education should help people understand that the earth is our common home.”

46-60 ♂ COLOMBIA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“A global context with local essence”

Even more so than today, respondents envisaged a future world with a fully global outlook. Higher education, which has long had an international outreach, is well-positioned to help tackle global challenges and take on a role in global society as we look ahead to 2050.

Yet there was also a desire among respondents for higher education in the futures to return to its

roots, whether this is local and/or regional, and link it to sustainability and local industry. This means understanding the challenges and opportunities of the local environment while also connecting with local actors. The key challenges for higher education will be to balance a global positioning with equally strong attention to local contexts, and to place sustainability at the heart of all its functions.

“[Higher education could contribute to better futures for all in 2050 by having a] global context with local essence.”

46-60 ♀ INDIA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Inclusive, participatory, local with an international outlook.”

46-60 ♂ SENEGAL Unemployed

By being simultaneously global and local, respondents saw higher education playing a facilitating role in bringing different groups together with the shared objective of making the world a better place.

“Build a community of practice in local and global society provide innovative solution of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

46-60 ♂ CHINA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

The responses suggested that these links will work in multiple directions. Higher education can work from the grassroots upwards to form local and regional partnerships. A focus on the local community may have benefits that go beyond these partnerships. By taking more steps to connect with local needs and concerns, respondents recognize higher education’s capacity to take this learning and extend it beyond the local context. Higher education’s role is to open horizons.

“It [higher education] should be about local community. The world university ranking in particular doesn’t help the 98% of HE providers. In turn it just created a wrong perception for those universities who are not ranked in the system.”

46-60 ♂ QATAR
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Higher education open to all (specific education and training) and closer to the needs of the population and the world (research).”

>60 ♂ IVORY COAST
Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

“Higher education without borders”

International and cross-cultural exchange have always been essential to the flourishing of knowledge and ideas. Collaboration with other higher education institutions and between researchers and students should continue to be central as higher education becomes increasingly borderless.

“A higher education without borders, intercultural, collaborative, socially responsible and depending on the good of the peoples.”

31-45 ♀ CUBA
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

Respondents said that this should be strengthened by collaborative action, which will reinforce the search for the common good, and the possibility of offering new and better ideas based on tolerance, respect, and the needs of diverse communities, without forgetting the planet.

“A more organic and universal education, focused on the development of international, intercultural and global competences to live and act in a global world. An education that builds values in the search for the common good and the care of the planet.”

31-45 ♂ NICARAGUA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“Education has to vary in the forms of learning and teaching, focused a little more on practical preparation without setting aside the theory, but encouraging more human relationships, and collaboration between people.”

31-45 ♂ COSTA RICA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

The concept of academic mobility opens the possibilities for cross-border travel to share knowledge and collaborate with each other. Respondents saw a future in which academic mobility continues and expands to reach more people in more places.

“Accessible for all, as a learning process throughout life, and that allowed global mobility without limits for effective knowledge transfer.”

46-60 ♀ SPAIN
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

The responses suggested that facilitating borderless higher education will require greater action by higher education institutions as well as by policymakers to recognize qualifications, regardless of their origin. The mutual recognition of higher education qualifications underpins greater mobility but also supports greater equality between higher education systems through developing compatible and comparable qualifications. In the global scenario envisaged by respondents, this common understanding will be essential.

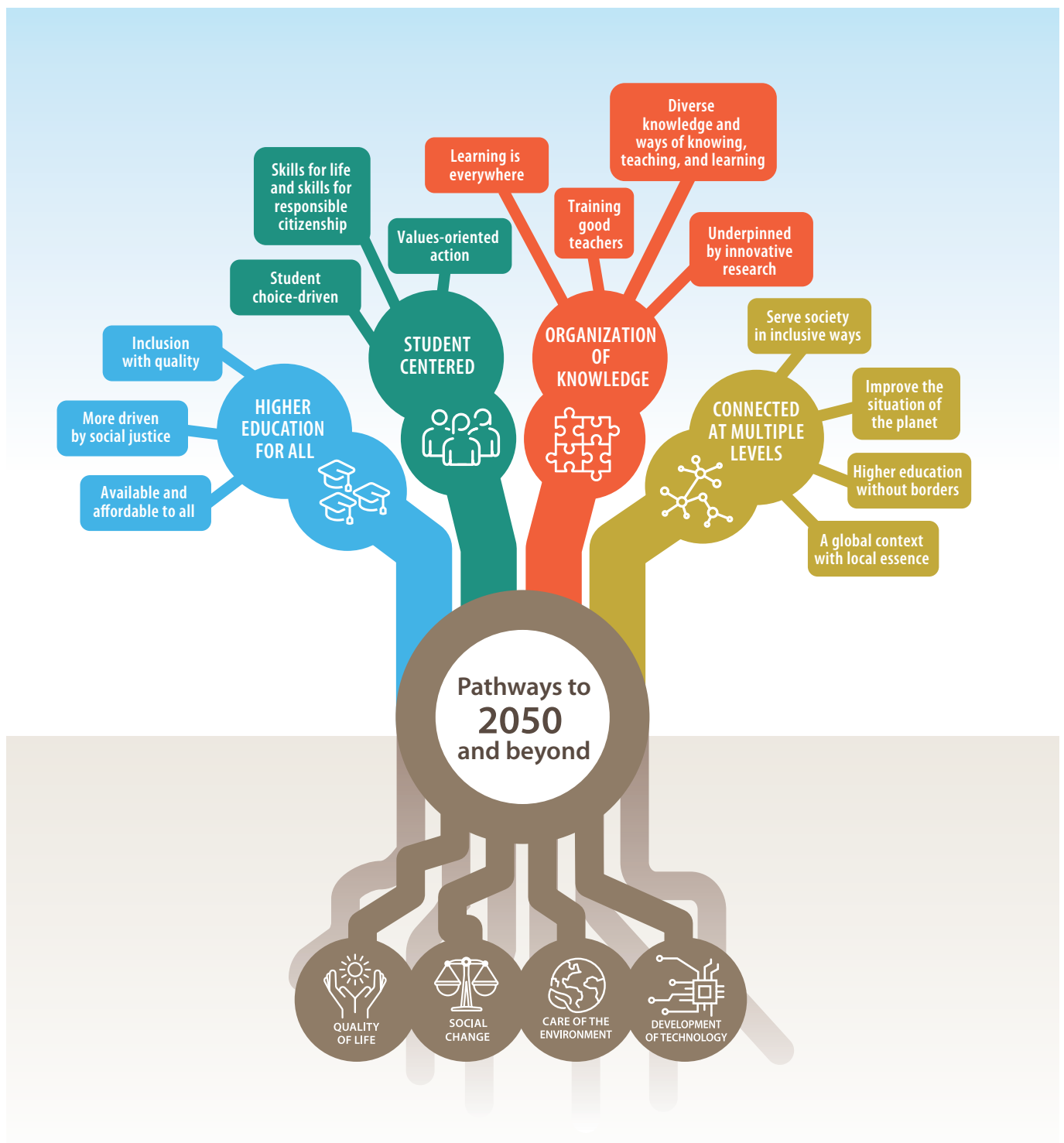
“[Higher education should be] without borders and [having] global reach. That is, regardless of the place... a citizen can develop a career and it is recognized in any country.”

46-60 ♀ VENEZUELA
Private sector worker in any other field

2.5 Summary

In Part 2 of the report, responses to the public consultation setting out future visions for higher education were organized under four themes and using different headings that themselves were also direct quotes from respondents. The themes are all connected to the [Pathways to 2050 and beyond](#). Opening access to higher education and striving for greater equity were key messages from respondents and discussed under the

theme of **higher education for all**. Respondents' suggestions focused on **student-centered** future learning processes, emphasizing quality, student choice, skills, and values. The **organization of knowledge** for teacher development, what is taught, and the place for research and innovation were also reflected in respondents' ideas. Respondents also envisioned higher education in 2050 as being much more integrated than today and **connected at multiple levels** with society, with the planet, within and across borders.



3

Analysis by region and profile

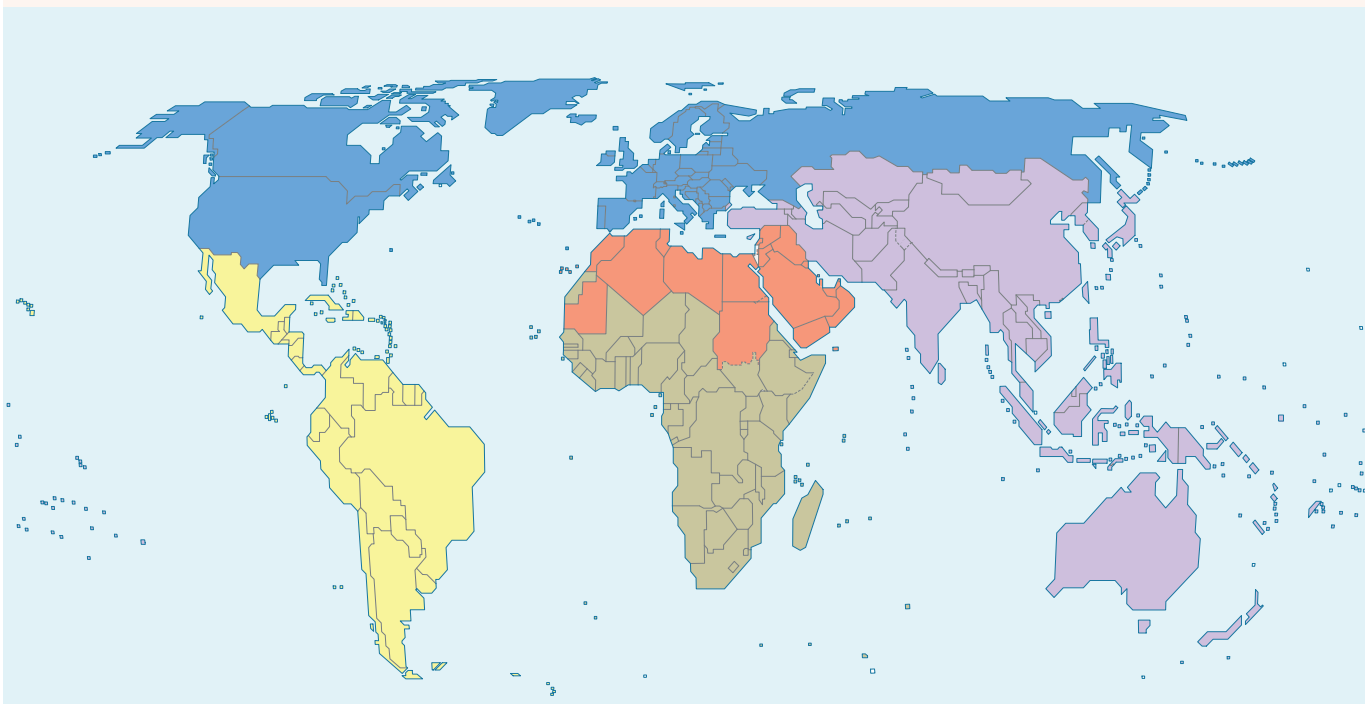
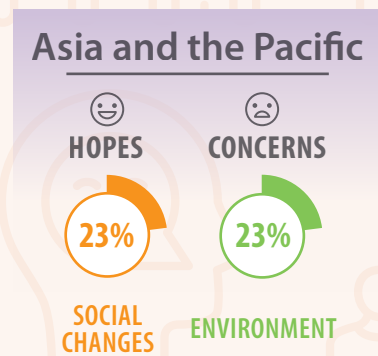
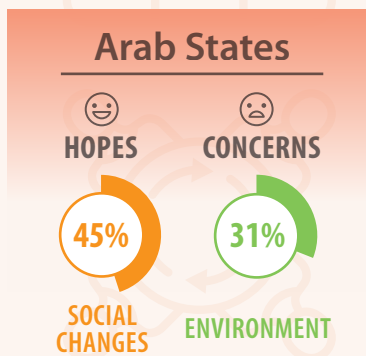
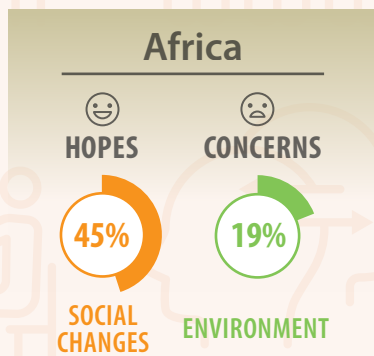
This part of the report examines the public consultation responses by the demographic characteristics of region, gender, and youth. While the four pathways of quality of life, social change, care of the environment, and the development of technology are shared interests, specific ideas or challenges associated with each can be found depending on region, gender, or age group.

3.1 Analysis by region

The variations in responses to the public consultation by world region showed certain particularities and demands, which may be conditioned by the political, social, economic, and cultural

situation that respondents are currently experiencing. This can be seen in certain topics such as social justice or the environment, points that were widely mentioned in all regions of the world, but that were related or associated with different topics in each region.

KEY HOPES AND CONCERNS BY REGION



3.1.1 Africa

In Africa, respondents' hopes were largely focused on the pathway identified relating to social change as noted by 45% of respondents from the region. Achieving social justice for all, focused on equal rights for everyone through access to education and employment, stood out as the most mentioned topic in this pathway. To achieve this development, as well as social justice, young people must be well educated and have a positive impact on their societies.

"Most youth in developing countries will be able to acquire a quality higher education and secure sustainable employment."

46-60 ♂ KENYA Higher education staff, manager

Respondents' concerns in this region were also focused on caring for the environment (noted by 19% of respondents). The main concern in this region was about the future of the environment, fear of the effect that pollution may have, and its impact on climate change. There were concerns about future natural disasters that may occur and affect the sustainability of the planet and limit access to resources.

"Climate change and its effect on the welfare and economy of people."

>60 ♀ ETHIOPIA

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

When it comes to higher education, respondents in this region hoped for ways forward where education can be the tool that provides direction for everyone. People who responded to the public consultation said that they would like to have opportunities equal to those of other regions of the world, with higher education functioning as a socio-economic ladder. Respondents hoped that an improvement in issues of social justice, access to higher education and well-functioning international relations between their countries and the other regions of the world could make a positive difference to higher education in the future.

"Relevant to local contexts but being globally connected. Serving large swathes of the population on an ongoing basis. The development of world-class centers of research that address the grand challenges facing our societies."

>60 ♂ SOUTH AFRICA

Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

3.1.2 Arab States

In the Arab States, respondents placed more hope on achieving social change, which was listed by 45% of respondents from the region. There was a majority opinion about achieving social justice in the future, demanding a more egalitarian society and access to education, which must also be of quality for all. This will allow the new generations to be trained so that they can build a better place to live. These demands may be influenced by the socioeconomic contrasts that exist within their societies.

"Higher education will be the milestone for any progress for the country."

46-60 ♂ EGYPT Higher education staff, manager

In this region, respondents' main concerns were about environmental care, mentioned by 31% of respondents. Climate change and its impacts on the sustainability of the planet produce a delicate situation in countries that are characterized as having desert geography. Respondents also made connections between caring for the environment and people's quality of life, which was mentioned by 23% of respondents from this region.

"The degradation of climatic and health situations."

46-60 ♂ ALGERIA Public sector worker in any other field

As was the case for the Africa region, respondents in the Arab States region sought a path for future generations through higher education. The importance of new teaching modalities and the new for-

mats that could be implemented, such as access to technological tools that allow the execution of distance or digital education, were highlighted.

“Optional between physical attendance and online learning at one time. More focused on the personal and psychological growth of human beings as humans, rather than productive machines... equal opportunities of quality higher educational systems for all.”

31-45 ♀ LEBANON

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents in the region suggested a focus on attending to the social needs of the population, at least partly through research and innovation. To better prepare people to face these social needs, it is important for the majority to have access to higher education, which should be free and inclusive, providing equal opportunities to all. Through greater access to higher education, it will be possible to develop activities and technologies that meet the main demands and needs of the population, developing a better place to live, both socially and environmentally.

3.1.3 Asia and the Pacific

In Asia and the Pacific, respondents' hopes for social change (mentioned by 23% of respondents) and a better quality of life (also mentioned by 23% of respondents) had equal prominence. As part of the hopes for a better quality of life, the most predominant notion was peace. In this region, respondents related peace to the wellbeing of the human being and of society, highlighting the importance of having better health, adequate nourishment, and a harmonious balance with the environment. This vision may be influenced by the philosophy of life found in many societies in Asia and the Pacific.

“Greater coexistence and sustainability between nature and people. Peace and prosperity between people.”

31-45 ♀ LEBANON

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

In Asia and the Pacific, the main concern from respondents was care of the environment, listed by 23% of respondents. This mainly highlighted the concern for the environment and the destruction it has suffered along with the effects of climate change. This would affect the sustainability of the planet, resulting in the deterioration of health conditions, new pandemics, increased inequalities, more poverty, and wars. Likewise, these concerns may be influenced by the epidemics that have affected this region in recent years.

“The detrimental impact of climate change, the risk of new pandemics...”

31-45 ♂ KAZAKHSTAN Higher education staff, manager

Respondents in this region wanted higher education to impact and benefit people. This came with the expectation that higher education should be more closely connected to everyday life. On the other hand, the need for access and inclusion to high education was reiterated. Respondents proposed that, if free education is possible in the future, and that it trains better people, with better values, social challenges will be addressed in a better way, and for the equitable benefit of all.

“Higher education is more relevant to day-to-day life and is a space for more practical learning.”

31-45 ♀ MYANMAR

Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

“Helping people to understand their social responsibility and fight for social justice and sustainable development of community.”

31-45 ♀ VIETNAM

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

The text box 'The future impact of innovation' is a story on innovation and China, an interpretation based on the multiple Chinese respondents who discussed the future impact of innovation on their life and society.



THE FUTURE IMPACT OF INNOVATION

“Life will be totally changed due to a number of innovations”

46-60 ♂ CHINA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“It assists humans to make more breakthroughs in all respects”

16-30 ♀ CHINA Higher education student

“Technology for all people can do less labor more achievement”

16-30 ♀ CHINA Higher education student

“Higher education boosts the technology which is the ultimate power for economic growth”

16-30 ♂ CHINA Higher education student

“Innovative and equal, ethical”

16-30 ♂ CHINA Higher education student

3.1.4 Europe and North America

In Europe and North America, people’s hopes were focused on achieving social change in the future, as noted by almost half (49%) of respondents. Respondents in this region understood that it is important to achieve equality among all members of society, access to opportunities, and access to education, achievements that they considered can be achieved in a more sustainable and democratic planet. This vision is influenced by the same values that characterize many of the societies of the countries of this region: democracy, equality, and social welfare.

“The chance that people will respect equality and its power for everyone.”

>60 ♀ IRELAND
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Concerns in this region centered on care of the environment, noted by 39% of respondents. The existing cumulative and extractivist model, together with climate change, will put the sustain-

ability of the planet and the environment at risk. The fragility of the environment could deepen existing social inequalities, increasing the possibility of causing social collapse or new conflicts.

“I am concerned about the damage that mankind could cause to the planet. Also, I hope that the countries will not enter another war in the pursuit of power and resources.”

16-30 ♀ RUSSIA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

In Europe and North America, respondents’ focus for higher education was free and universal access. Minority groups that have historically been discriminated against will be included. Higher education will have the responsibility to create a better world, with diversity bringing prosperity and helping to improve the world. Many respondents in this region mentioned current political pressures and advised higher education to stand firm in the face of powerful political and economic forces in the coming years.

“Higher education must not succumb to the pressures of neither authoritarian governments, nor private funding interests. It should not remain an Ivory Tower, nor a place of social reproduction but a place for critical thinking, providing innovative reflections for a common better future of the world.”

31-45 ♀ AUSTRIA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

3.1.5 Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean, as in other regions, respondents’ hopes for the future were focused on achieving social change (mentioned by 41% of respondents). Respondents in this region hoped to achieve social justice and more egalitarian societies with the same rights for all and without discrimination based on gender or socioeconomic status. As the most unequal region in the world, this hope for social justice from respondents came as little surprise. It was also

considered important to achieve social justice to have access to health and education.

“The possibility of a more just and equitable society. With States that guarantee the integral wellbeing and full development of the people.”

46-60 ♀ CHILE

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Consequently, respondents in the region expressed concerns about lack of social change (listed by 43% of respondents). These were connected to concerns about the environment, with respondents highlighting the impact of climate change on access to resources, increased poverty, and inequalities. These are issues that already exist in this region and have been aggravated by the current pandemic, so respondents' concerns were focused on a known reality with concerns that this would remain in the future.

“A more sustainable world, with nature more protected.”

>60 ♂ HONDURAS

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

People's visions for higher education in this region were more diverse than responses from other regions. First, there was a strong focus on issues of morals, ethics, and principles, giving higher education the responsibility of ensuring these principles in its academic processes. This results in giving a purpose to people beyond working and generating income, such as caring for the environment, looking after other people, or trying to be fair with others in their daily life.

To achieve this, high access and inclusion are needed. Respondents hoped to see the fruit of innovation and new ways of teaching and learning in the future, recognizing that higher education institutions cannot be left behind in technology and in new educational formats, which together contribute towards the same cause: improving the planet for years to come.

“The modality is not important, only that they are cooperative teaching and learning processes that respond to the basic needs of humanity in politically ethical terms. Critical, creative and productive processes, from and for life.”

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

3.2 Analysis by gender

Respondents said that closing the gender gap in all areas, especially in education, will be a necessary condition to achieve sustainable and inclusive higher education in the upcoming years. In this context, it is important to understand the opinions of women, men, and non-binary persons, as members of society as a whole, but also considering their specific needs, hopes and concerns.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Gender equality is not only one of the most important goals within the 2030 agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but it transversally impacts other – if not all – SDGs, including quality education

4 QUALITY EDUCATION
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

5 GENDER EQUALITY
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The public consultation had important female representation with 57% of respondents identifying as female (41% identified as male). There were very few responses from people who identified as non-binary and none self-identifying within this group from Africa or the Arab States. Nevertheless, recognition of the need for more inclusion and understanding of the diverse genders and their needs was an important step taken in this public consultation.

The participation rate of women in the consultation was almost the same across regions, although the African region presented an opposite trend with four women for every six men. Considering that, overall, women have higher presence than men in higher education worldwide, female representation in future consultations should be expanded in those regions where there was an opposite trend. Women's responses across regions corroborated this need as they mentioned access and inclusion more than men.

When asked about their perspectives on the next decades, both women and men shared similar hopes and concerns for the futures. However, when comparing the proportion of women and

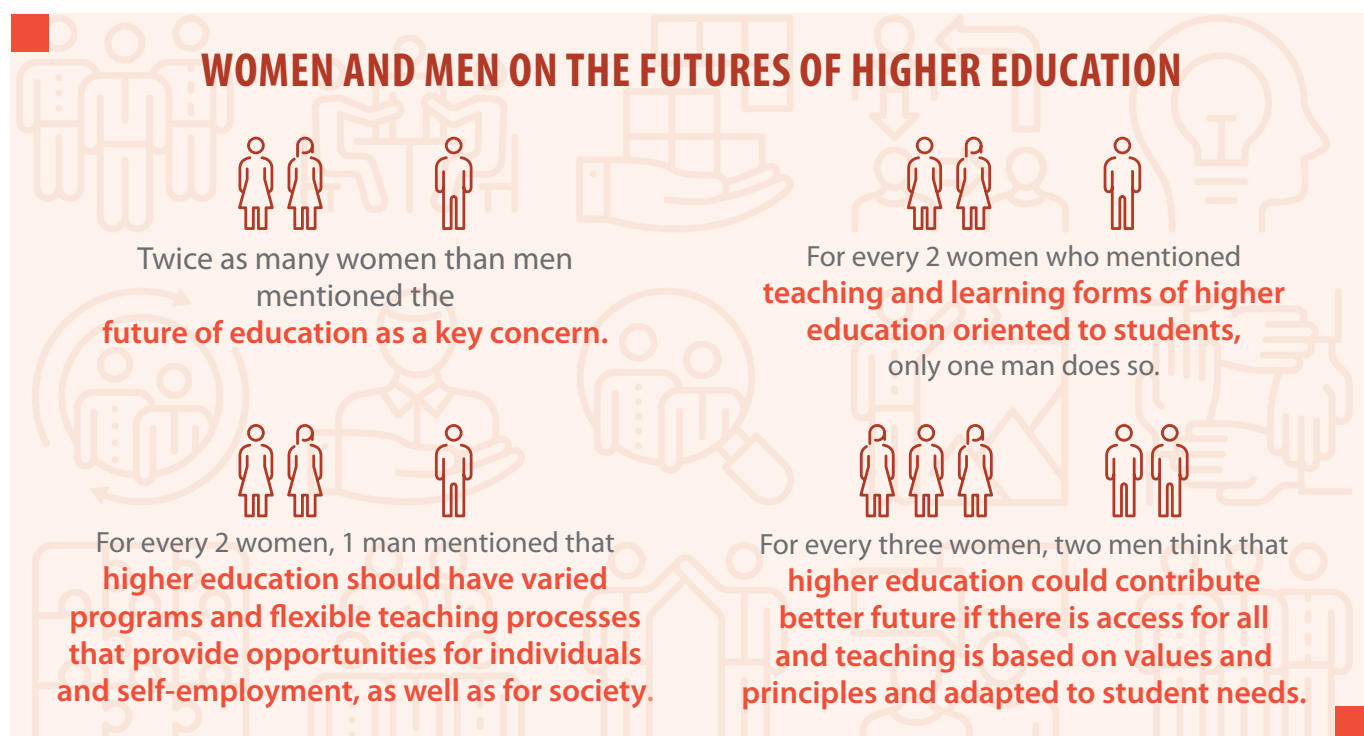
men that care about a particular topic, there were some clear differences. More women mentioned the collective wellbeing of future generations, in particular regarding climate change, social change, and the future of education, compared to men. On the other hand, more men spoke about the quality of life and the impact of technological advances.

Most women declared that skills, student development and critical thinking would be necessary in higher education. There was a smaller gap in the opinions of women and men on the shared desire for access for all in higher education, for higher education that imparts values and principles, as well as having clear and flexible but purposeful training paths. Slightly more men than women saw higher education as having an impact on society in all its forms, from the training process and higher education's social links with people, the community, and the world.

“Knowledge transmission and creation of new knowledge relevant to tackle 21st century challenges; incubator for new ideas and glocal movements.”

31-45 ♀ FRANCE

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education



“Much more influential, inclusive, diversified, accessible, dynamic.”

31-45 ♂ GUYANA Private sector worker in any other field

“Education should focus on providing skills based on the future of work with balance of philosophical education, critical judgement and various aspects of the humanities.”

16-30 ♀ PERU

Private sector worker in any other field

“Integral, social, humanistic, scientific, education and universities with social projection, and public education, free for all, mainly for the poor sectors.”

>60 ♂ GUATEMALA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Women’s answers were more inclined to mention collective and humanistic aspects of the future in general and the quality of teaching and learning and potential social change more specifically in relation to higher education. Men tended to concentrate on areas such as the economy, technology, and access to resources. Although not possible to state conclusively, these differences might result from the social constructs that encourage women to be responsible for caring for others, despite the importance of such work and occupations for all people.

“If we can make every adult of the world to have at least an undergraduate degree, sustainable development will be much easier to achieve because with an educated population, development concepts and programs are easier to execute.”

31-45 ♂ ZAMBIA

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

Overall, while there were some differences between those identifying as women and those identifying as men, these were not overly divi-

sive. It seems rather that, collectively, we all have many common goals for the future.

3.3 Youth

Youth participation⁶ in the public consultation was quite modest at 20% of the total participation rate. 59% of those listing their age as 30 or younger were students: 9% studying in school and 50% already enrolled in higher education.

While students were central to ideas put forward about higher education, the mention of young people in general was very low. Across the four questions in the consultation, the total number of responses mentioning youth was 75 – less than 2% of the total.

Among the youth respondents, a sense of the need for connection as well as for individual needs were not conflicting but rather complemented different activities of their perceived futures. Young people considered independence and individualization an important part of their future learning process, while at the same time, stressing the links between growth in their own lives and the development of their surrounding environments.

“Independence and decision making to be encouraged and implemented.”

16-30 ♂ INDIA Higher education student

“Hopefully a more sustainable way of living where well-being, whether that be environmental or personal, is prioritized and quality of life is seen as more than a purely economic category.”

16-30 ♂ CANADA Higher education student

The youth respondents who provided answers concerning young people (10 respondents) all identified as women. This group associated them-

6 Those reporting their age as 15 or under (3 respondents) or 16-30 (230 respondents). The age groupings used in this public consultation were broader than some categorizations of youth which include those aged 15-24.

selves with educational features such as inclusion and flexible learning pathways, and with social, political, cultural, and economic change, innovation, awareness, environment, and freedom of speech. While most respondents in this group indicated the role of youths as respondents in educational, societal, and global processes, one respondent defined youth rather as leaders.

Among respondents who included youth in their comments, but who did not fall within this demographic themselves, their hopes in this generation were their main desire for 2050. Others made more specific links between youth and leadership and responsibilities to push for changes and address global issues in different regions through skills, creativity, values and (higher) education.

“Accessible and led by young researchers and innovative programs able to engage students and make them in touch with the work world.”

16-30 ♀ ITALY
Private sector worker in any other field

On the other hand, some respondents expressed concerns that young people might become less interested in pursuing higher education in the future.

“Young people’s disinterest and relativism in pursuing tertiary education.”

31-45 ♀ PARAGUAY Higher education student

And one respondent demonstrated both optimism and fear for young people by writing the same answer in response to their hope and concern for 2050.

“The youth who will deal with it.”

>60 ♂ CANADA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Analyzing data on youth from this public consultation was challenged by the rather limited youth participation. Yet the future is for the next generations: these are the futures that youth will be

YOUTH ON YOUTH IN 2050

When you think about 2050, what are you most hopeful about?

“Youth becoming leaders of change, a wider and more inclusive curriculum, increase in general inclusiveness for marginalized groups, such as refugees, indigenous people and women.”

16-30 ♀ FRANCE
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

“The young generation and potential for innovation.”

16-30 ♀
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

“Vocational higher education could take more responsibility in cultivating China’s young people, and the society could give more attention to this field as well.”

16-30 ♀ CHINA
Higher education staff, manager

“The greater awareness of the new generations.”

16-30 ♀ BRAZIL
Public sector worker in any other field

“Thanks to the work and effort of some of today’s young people, tomorrow will be much better.”

16-30 ♀ PERU
Private sector worker in any other field

“Hope is always in the faith of the new generations that are coming to transform everything.”

16-30 ♀ ARGENTINA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

“A more prosperous world, with more and more young people who care about the environment, are responsible for their actions and contribute to the planet.”

16-30 ♀ PERU
Higher education student

“To see young people who do not allow themselves to be blindfolded, who are not forced to remain silent.”

16-30 ♀ COLOMBIA
Higher education student

“Today’s youth is engaged and interested in politics, welfare, education.”

16-30 ♀ ARGENTINA
Public sector worker in any other field

living, making, and passing forward. Young people's futures cannot be predicted by those who have already lived through their youth, although adults can help by mobilizing their expertise and experiences. More voices from today's young people would help to equip them with the better futures they deserve.

3.4 Summary

This part of the report revealed some of the nuanced differences among responses based on respondents' self-reported country location, gender identity and age, with a focus on youth aged under 30. The imprint of the four [Pathways to 2050 and beyond](#) that form the foundation of this report were also evident when the responses were examined by region and profile.

Within those pathways, respondents in both Africa and the Arab States expressed ideas about so-

cial justice and the need for education to achieve this; in Asia and Pacific hopes for peace and human wellbeing were countered by concerns for the environment; in Europe and North America environmental and political concerns were prominent; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, access to health and (higher) education were seen as important steps towards equity.

All genders identified access and inclusion in higher education as key, and this was pronounced among respondents identifying as women who were the majority of respondents overall. Those identifying as male were more likely to mention issues relating to future quality of life and the impact of technological advances.

Those aged under 30 were hopeful for their educational futures, with that hope also reflecting on them as part of the generations to come in this world.

4

The impact of Covid-19 on future visions

This section reflects respondents' thoughts about the impact of Covid-19 on their visions of the futures. Perhaps surprisingly, only 54 respondents – less than 5% of the total – directly or indirectly addressed Covid-19 or other diseases that could be of similar impact, despite the pandemic's ongoing effects around the world at the time that the consultation was undertaken. Of those who did discuss the current pandemic, most did not seem to expect a similar event to persist as a major challenge by 2050. Higher education's perceived role in managing this or future pandemics demonstrated the high expectations placed by respondents on the sector.

4.1 Maintaining hope during a global pandemic

Respondents' immediate hopes that the Covid-19 pandemic will end seem to shape their vision of the futures in 2050. Respondents link this hope to the future health and safety of people and the environment.

"I hope we will be safe and healthy as a society out of the negative impact from the pandemic."

16-30 ♀ MEXICO

Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

Anticipation of the futures without pandemics is at the fore when respondents thought ahead towards 2050. Responses indicated that other challenges along with pandemics will also be resolved by 2050, such as unequal technology distribution, political tensions, and financial instability. The latter challenges were mentioned separately from the pandemic without distracting respondents' attention from thinking ahead into 2050.

[My biggest hope for 2050 is] "No more pandemic."

31-45 ♂ SINGAPORE

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Drawing on the experiences of Covid-19, respondents formulated the implications that the pandemic had for humanity. The sense of unity and collective responsibility for the environment were the acknowledged lessons. Respondents hoped that in the future, people will care more about their health and about other members of society.

[Covid-19 is an opportunity to] "put into action our creative processes in the possibility of the rebirth of a post-Covid-19 society, with values."

46-60 ♂ MEXICO

Private sector worker in a field related to higher education

Respondents expressed their hope to see resilient societies that can withstand any obstacles. For these respondents, 2050 presents a world that is free from Covid-19 travel restrictions, where international journeys once again form a substantial part of people's professional and personal lives.

4.2 The pandemic's intersecting effects

Respondents noted that the pandemic exposed a wide spectrum of societal concerns affecting relationship dynamics at national and interpersonal levels. Respondents' pessimistic responses about developing countries' situations reflected doubt that brighter futures will be available for all.

[Uneven access to technology] "Leaves less advanced economies hopeless."

31-45 ♂ NAMIBIA

Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents were aware that regional diversity and uneven access to resources can potentially grow into more serious conflicts and tensions. Concerns relating to the pandemic align with concerns over poverty and food and water insecurity: if resources were scarce pre-Covid, they became even harder to obtain under epidemiological restrictions.

Respondents also mentioned climate change and the pandemic side-by-side. Even in the absence of direct correlation between the two, public awareness indicated the universality of these challenges and for the survival of the planet.

[My concern is] "global threats as climate change or pandemics."

46-60 ♂ ITALY

Public sector worker in any other field

Respondents indicated their worry about the ending of the pandemic and foresaw its long-lasting effects. The skepticism about the ability to fully recover from the pandemic persisted in responses which exacerbated public anxiety related to Covid-19 stretching ahead in the future.

[My main concern is] “That after this pandemic we go back to the same practices because it means that we did not learn and did nothing to change.”

>60 ♀ MEXICO Higher education staff, manager

“That after this pandemic we go back to the same practices because it means that we did not learn and did nothing to change.”

>60 ♂ PERU
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

4.3 High expectations of higher education

In the public consultation, respondents did not necessarily recognize the role being played by higher education in identifying research-based solutions for Covid-19. However, respondents did emphasize how higher education has been affected by the pandemic as well as the need for it to change to stay relevant to societal needs.

“As Covid has taught us, full-time learning and teaching at the institution will disappear, now we will always have blended / managed learning.”

46-60 ♂ INDIA
Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

On the other hand, the experience of the pandemic led some respondents to hope that it would not mean the loss of certain functions and facilities in higher education, but rather their re-generation.

“The pandemic does not make us lose face-to-face spaces for discussion and co-learning.”

31-45 ♀ SPAIN Higher education student

Respondents' expectations of higher education in the futures were very high. Higher education institutions are expected to fully embrace their educational functions when it comes to challenges such as climate change and pandemics to ensure that societies can prepare for and address these global disruptions.

[I would like higher education in 2050] “To be a meeting point of idea and knowledge for advancing sustainable development of human resources and ecosystems.”

46-60 ♂ NIGERIA
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

Respondents also hoped that global higher education will be more resistant in future to prevent dropouts and avoid quarantine measures. This might, however, be outside higher education's reach because current epidemiological restrictions allowed no exceptions when it came to preventing the spread of the disease.

“It will change the values, should act as a socio-economic driver, should respond to climate change and save the life of human[kind].”

46-60 ♂ AFGHANISTAN
Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty

4.4 Summary

In relation to the impact of Covid-19, responses began with respondents' hopes for brighter futures. These hopes subsided as anxiety continued around health and its intersections with climate change, inequalities, and other global challenges. In their high expectations of the futures of higher education, respondents were hopeful that higher education institutions will be beacons of information, providing reliable and relevant knowledge to overcome future crises and at the same time becoming more resistant to their impact.

5

Calls to action

The findings of UNESCO IESALC's widescale global public consultation proposed a range of ideas and suggestions for our plural futures. The public consultation reflected some common points, the strongest of which was that **access to higher education should be available to all**. Despite the many areas in common, encapsulated in the Pathways to 2050 and beyond as quality of life, social change, care of the environment and the development of technology, the public consultation also exhibited some of the contradictory aspects that are to be expected when envisioning the paths that may lie ahead.

In the hopes for greater inclusion in higher education reflected by respondents, few commented on how such efforts would be financed. Respondents pointed out the importance of improving higher education's relations with the planet and at the same time most set their future visions of the organization of higher education within today's national boundaries. Similarly, there was a tension in the dual focus in the responses on the need to be more relevant, particularly to local communities, while also developing higher education's international dimensions.

Rather than seeing these differences as incompatible or unresolvable, both the shared appeals and the variety in responses to this public consultation are reflective of the ongoing need to continue to rethink and reimagine our world through the lens of higher education. Expectations for higher education in our multiple futures are high. There is no doubt that higher education has a responsibility in the development of society at different levels (globally, regionally, and locally), even more so from today's starting point where we are still

dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. From all continents, genders, ages, and occupational positions, higher education is asked to be adaptive, relevant, and able to resolve the social problems we face as well as to respond to societal needs.

Creating the futures for higher education as imagined by respondents in this public consultation is a collective effort, especially for those most in need. As such, this report closes by proposing six calls to action, all stemming from responses to this public consultation. These calls connect with new as well as ongoing work by UNESCO that places education at the core of individual and societal transformation.

These calls to action seek to inspire those in higher education, policymakers, and civil society –members of the public as well as organized groups– to take up the challenge of envisioning better futures for all through the contributions that higher education could make to our paths to 2050 and beyond.

- 1**  **Advocate for the right to higher education**
- 2**  **Address the barriers that limit participation**
- 3**  **Open up access to knowledge**
- 4**  **Empower the next generations**
- 5**  **Strive for higher education to be more relevant**
- 6**  **Become a futures thinker**



1 Advocate for the right to higher education

Respondents in this consultation overwhelmingly expect higher education to continue to play an important role in future societies and communities. Many even suggested that this role should be broadened as higher education becomes more relevant in the multiple futures that lie ahead. The trust shown in higher education, whether in educating responsible citizens, as a source of reliable information, or as a generator of new and important knowledge, needs to be broadcast widely.

UNESCO IN ACTION

The UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education facilitates the recognition of degrees globally and eases the movement of peoples. Wide acceptance of the Global Convention and related Regional Conventions will aid in embedding shared beliefs and values in global higher education while preserving the diversity and uniqueness of different systems and uplifting the quality of higher education. UNESCO IESALC has launched a multilingual open access course on the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies as part of UNESCO's advocacy in this area.



2 Address the barriers that limit participation

If all levels of education are viewed as a universal right and the consensus from the public consultation is that access to higher education should be widened, it becomes even more important not only to understand the barriers to participation but to lift them completely. This will require efforts on many fronts, from research to advocacy to policy change. Expanding access to higher education is not only about letting more people in to higher education, but also about supporting students to fulfil their individual capacities, finding ways to organize higher education that meet differential needs as well as funding higher education sufficiently.

UNESCO IN ACTION

UNESCO believes that the right to education is lifelong, encompassing all levels of education. Concluding the 60th anniversary of the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, UNESCO is marking Human Rights Day in 2021 with an international seminar on the evolving right to education. UNESCO IESALC has begun a new project that is advancing a social justice understanding of the right to higher education. Connecting with ongoing work by UNESCO on the right to education, the project will lay the basis for developing a new series of principles for states on the right to higher education.



For those that engage in the production of knowledge across the multiple forms of knowledge that exist, ways to make that knowledge available and accessible to more people should be sought. This could be through translation into different languages, publishing in open access journals, promoting open science, greater international collaboration, making course content freely available, or using technology to engage people in different regions. Engaging more with communities will also help to overcome the persistent unequal access to knowledge and resources.

UNESCO IN ACTION

UNESCO IESALC publishes an open access peer reviewed journal, *Higher Education and Society*, to which articles may be submitted in Spanish and English. The UNESCO Global Recommendation on Open Science, being recommended for adoption at the UNESCO General Conference in late 2021, will set new international standards for the democratization of science and scientific knowledge. It calls for the broad circulation of scientific knowledge, greater international scientific cooperation and strengthened links between science and society. The Recommendation also proposes that states dedicate 1% of their national gross domestic product for research and cooperation.



When discussing the paths ahead, more voices and actions from the generations that will live in future times are needed. We need to empower today's young people to express themselves as well as to take leadership roles in their own futures. At the same time, we need to listen to the words from youth on what is needed in higher education, because they are the ones who will use and benefit from it. By mobilizing multi-stakeholder engagement to create better futures in higher education, a balance can be found between what youth hope for and what can be achieved, one step at a time and in partnership.

UNESCO IN ACTION

As part of UNESCO's major initiative on the futures of education, one of the ideas for public action for education in a post-Covid world has called for student, youth, and children's participation and rights to be prioritized. Contributing to this initiative, UNESCO Associated Schools Network has mobilized over 2,500 school leaders, teachers, students, and parents to engage in joint reflections on the futures. Further youth consultation is envisaged in UNESCO IESALC's project on the futures of higher education through interactive workshops with the next generation of students in all world regions.



5 Strive for higher education to be more relevant

The transfer of knowledge from what is learned in higher education to what is practiced at local, national, and global levels needs to be reinforced. Higher education knows how to innovate and can apply this know-how to innovate its programming, research, culture, cooperation and use of technology. Students and teachers can push for transformations from within and policymakers and civil society can canvass for change through funding, partnerships, and guidance.

UNESCO IN ACTION

Recognizing the importance of integrating sustainability into learning processes and to deepen expertise in transformative online pedagogies, UNESCO IESALC has partnered with three universities to create the **Learning Design and Education for Sustainable Development Bootcamp**. Being pioneered in 2022, the Bootcamp aims to provide the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to overcome the global challenges of today and the future. Operating in English and Spanish, training for mentors and the Bootcamp are all offered for free.



6 Become a futures thinker

The futures often seem distant, even unimaginable, particularly in moments of immediate crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, that consume our global attention. And yet, the futures are closer than we might think – even when considering a 30-year horizon. As the 1,200 respondents in this consultation demonstrated, it is in fact possible to project ourselves into a forward-looking horizon, whether we imagine ourselves or those who follow after us in those spaces. Becoming a futures thinker also acknowledges the importance of anticipating challenges before they are upon us, and of the need to push for change now even if it will take decades to see full results.

UNESCO IN ACTION

The **World Higher Education Conference (WHEC)**, being organized by UNESCO in 2022, will bring together a wide range of higher education stakeholders to reflect on today's issues and prepare a roadmap for a new era of higher education. As part of the events taking place prior to WHEC, UNESCO IESALC is organizing an **open consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean**. At WHEC, one of the main themes is the futures of higher education, for which a new methodology for futures thinking has been developed. This will be published open access and developed through a series of activities during and beyond the conference.

Annex 1

Survey Questions

Survey title: **Futures of higher education – public consultation**

Introduction

Higher education will shape the future of humanity and the planet. Regardless of where you live and work, or whether you have experienced higher education, you have the right to voice your opinion on the futures of higher education.

By higher education, we mean all types of study programmes and courses of study at post-secondary level. Higher education can take place in universities, colleges, academies, conservatories, and specialized institutes.

We invite everyone to join UNESCO IESALC in exploring the futures of higher education. This public consultation is linked to UNESCO's Futures of Education, a global initiative to reimagine how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet (<https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/>).

Section 1: About you

Where you live – Select one country from a list of all countries

Your current occupation – Select one:

- School student
- Higher education student
- School teacher, staff, manager
- Higher education teacher, lecturer, researcher, faculty
- Higher education staff, manager
- Public sector worker in a field related to higher education

- Public sector worker in any other field
- Private sector worker in a field related to higher education
- Private sector worker in any other field
- Retired
- Unemployed

Your age – Select one:

- Under 15
- 16-30
- 31-45
- 46-60
- >60
- Prefer not to disclose

Your gender identity – Select one:

- Female
- Male
- Nonbinary
- Prefer not to disclose

Section 2: How do you see the future?

When you think about 2050, what are you most hopeful about? [Free text response]

When you think about 2050, what are you most concerned about? [Free text response]

How would you like higher education to be in 2050? [Free text response]

How could higher education contribute to better futures for all in 2050? [Free text response]

UNESCO – a global leader in education

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.



The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) is the only specialized institute of the United Nations system with the mission to contribute to the improvement of higher education in member States. The Institute organizes its activities around working programs that reflect the priority themes set biannually by its Governing Board and approved by the UNESCO General Conference. Through research, capacity building, technical cooperation, and concerted advocacy, UNESCO IESALC fulfills its mission of promoting the right to higher education. UNESCO IESALC supports the formulation and implementation of quality, equitable, and inclusive higher education policies at regional, national and institutional levels in Latin America and the Caribbean, aiming at a global outreach.

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