

UNESCO Chairs Seminars Futures of Higher Education

Seminar 2: Knowledge-driven actions – Transforming higher education for global sustainability

Date and time: Wednesday 15 February 2023, 17:00 to 18:30 (Paris time)
Languages: English and French
Format: Zoom – please click [here](#) to register

Seminar description

In October 2020, in collaboration with the University of Bergen, UNESCO launched the Global Independent Expert Group on the Universities and the 2030 Agenda ([EGU2030](#)), with a mandate to reflect on the necessary knowledge and transformations required for higher education institutions to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Fourteen international experts from diverse backgrounds came together to discuss how universities can facilitate knowledge development and strategies to generate the deep social, economic and environmental transformations called for in the 2030 Agenda. This collaboration resulted in the expert group's report, [Knowledge-driven actions: Transforming higher education for global sustainability](#), which focuses on three key areas for transformation: moving beyond disciplinary boundaries for the SDGs; diversifying ways of knowing; and strengthening higher education partnerships. It calls for radical shifts in current development paradigms and directs attention to systemic barriers that must be tackled in order to pursue these necessary transformations.

The report was [officially launched](#) at the 3rd World Higher Education Conference ([WHEC2022](#)) in Barcelona, in May 2022, where higher education leaders and stakeholders discussed the challenges and possibilities for moving towards such transformations in practice.

The purpose of this Seminar is to continue the conversation and discuss how this report can be utilized and implemented within higher education systems and institutions, in favour of the 2030 Agenda. In thinking about the futures of higher education, how can the content and recommendations of this report be taken into action? What efforts are already ongoing by universities and their staff in this regard, and what are the biggest challenges they face? Three of the report's authors will share their perspectives and insights for using this report as a tool within higher education to generate critical reflection and action on these pressing matters.

**** [Register here](#) ****

Seminar 2: Knowledge-driven actions – Transforming higher education for global sustainability

Wednesday 15 February 2023, 17:00-18:30 (CET)

17:00-17:10	Opening remarks Keith Holmes , Research Coordinator, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme Team, UNESCO Ranwa Safadi , Chief, Section for Higher Education, UNESCO
17:10-17:20	Introduction Phoebe Kirkup , Section for Higher Education, UNESCO
17:20-17:50	Knowledge-driven actions: Transforming higher education for global sustainability <i>Moving beyond disciplinary boundaries for the Sustainable Development Goals</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agnes Binagwaho, Co-founder and Retired Vice Chancellor, University of Global Health Equity, Rwanda <i>Diversifying ways of knowing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Melody Brown Burkins, Director, Institute of Arctic Studies; Senior Associate Director, John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding; Adjunct Professor of Environmental Studies, University of the Arctic, Dartmouth, United States of America <i>Strengthening higher education partnerships</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dav Olav Hessen, Professor in Biosciences and Head of the Centre of Biogeochemistry in the Anthropocene, University of Oslo, Norway Round of questions
17:50 -18:20	Q&A with participants Moderator: Phoebe Kirkup
18:20-18:30	Final remarks and Closing Moderator: Phoebe Kirkup Keith Holmes

Speaker Bios

Agnes Binagwaho

Dr. Agnes Binagwaho is a Co-founder and Retired Vice Chancellor at the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) in Rwanda. She is a paediatrician who served the Rwandan health sector in various high-level government positions in Rwanda between 1996 and 2016, including five years as Minister of Health. Dr. Binagwaho has served as Senior Advisor to the Director General of the World Health Organization, is a member of the United States National Academy of Medicine since 2016 and a fellow of the African Academy of Sciences since 2017. After her work as health minister, Dr. Binagwaho focussed on educating the future workforce in the health sector, to radically change the way health care is delivered around the world by and co-founded the UGHE, which is dedicated to promoting sustainability and equal access to health for everybody by introducing interdisciplinary and innovative approaches.

Melody Brown Burkins

Dr. Melody Brown Burkins works at Dartmouth in the United States as Director at the Institute of Arctic Studies, Senior Associate Director of the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding, and Adjunct Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of the Arctic (UArctic). She works in a variety of positions and initiatives related to Arctic communities and their future. Dr. Burkins is the 2022-2026 UArctic Chair in Science Diplomacy and Inclusion, Vice Lead of the UArctic Model Arctic Council Thematic Network, and is a founding member of the UArctic Gender in Arctic Knowledge Production Thematic Network. Dr. Burkins is also serving her second term as an elected member of the International Science Council (ISC) Governing Board and serves on the ISC Committee on Freedom and Responsibility of Science (CFRS). With over 25 years of experience in both academe and government, she is an advocate for experiential education, policy-engaged research, and the inclusion of diverse knowledge systems in decision-making around global challenges.

Dav Olav Hessen

Professor Olav Hessen became a Research leader at Norway Institute of Water Research before becoming a full professor in Biosciences at University of Oslo, Norway in 1993, where he is presently also Head of the Centre of Biogeochemistry in the Anthropocene in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Professor Hessen's major interests include food web ecology and "ecological stoichiometry" in aquatic food-webs. He has published papers on genomic evolution and regulation of growth rate via rDNA and RNA in various organisms. Professor Hessen has ongoing studies on climatic effects on element cycling and biota at high latitudes, however his current interest is carbon cycling in ecosystems and its bearings on climate. Hessen has a wide collaboration with social sciences, and has published some 25 popular science books related to humans in nature and human's nature.