



Higher education partnerships for societal impact

IAU believes that higher education institutions (HEIs) play an important role in the development of societies. Universities are educating tomorrow's citizens, thought leaders, decision-makers, business leaders, innovators. Through research, new knowledge is constantly being generated. Gearing education and research towards addressing societal needs and challenges will help define and develop the solutions that are to be implemented to address the challenges the world faces today.

In the UNESCO publication, *Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good*, it is stressed that: *"Given the need for sustainable development in an increasingly interdependent world, education and knowledge should be considered global common goods. Inspired by the value of solidarity grounded in our common humanity, the principle of knowledge and education as global common goods has implications for the roles and responsibilities of the diverse stakeholders."*

Higher education is one such stakeholder and an important one. It can and should not operate in isolation; on the contrary, HE is a key driver for change and innovation in and for the societies in which it operates.

Higher education institutions engage with society and in a variety of ways. Partnerships with civil society, the private sector, the local authorities and decision-makers or between HEIs take on numerous forms and shapes. The kind of partnership developed and the way it is managed impact on the ways in which universities contribute to the development of their societies, as do the national context, the type of institution they are and the specific challenges they face.

By focusing the IAU 2018 International Conference on the theme *Higher education partnerships for societal impact*, the Association invites its members, the global higher education communities, and their partners to reflect on and discuss their mandate and social responsibility, while presenting different forms of partnerships adopted around the world and for what societal impact. The conference will also be a venue to discuss the challenges and obstacles related to delivering on the third mission of universities.

In the plenary sessions, keynote speakers will address and discuss the topic and frame the discussions from a conceptual perspective; the three series of breakout sessions will include examples of HE partnerships aiming for societal impact. The break-out sessions will allow for discussion and exchange among peers and hopefully inspire new partnerships around the world.

IAU invites the leaders (rectors, presidents, Vice-Chancellors) of universities and other higher education institutions to join the conference, take part in the discussions, share ideas, get inspired by peers and develop new ways to ensure that HEIs can make a difference at the societal level.