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Synthesis of the GUNI Higher Education in the World Reports

Higher Education at a Time of Transformation: New Dynamics for Social Responsibility was specially commissioned by UNESCO for the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE). Taken from the Global University Network of Innovation (GUNI) Series on the Social Commitment of Universities, which explores key issues facing higher education in the twenty-first century, this publication is a synthesis of the three reports:

- *Higher Education in the World 2006: The Financing of Universities*
- *Higher Education in the World 2007: Accreditation for Quality Assurance: What is at Stake?*
- *Higher Education in the World 3. Higher Education: New Challenges and Emerging Roles for Human and Social Development*

Including contributions from 70 authors from 34 countries, this publication showcases the key ideas from the global issues and the regional perspectives, as well as 24 good practices, making it an essential tool for all involved in higher education.

This publication analyzes the present and future challenges faced by higher education institutions in the context of globalization, providing a perspective on the financing of higher education, and on the accreditation mechanisms that are in place for assuring quality. It also examines the challenges and emerging roles of higher education in terms of its contribution to human and social development.

The publication also focuses on how higher education institutions (HEIs) could contribute to a systematic and proactive analysis to develop critical discourses with which societies can continually reflect on their evolution for a positive social transformation. It considers how HEIs could strengthen their role as agents of transformation, facing both local and global challenges, and suggests that their vision and mission need to be re-oriented towards the creation and distribution of socially relevant knowledge and a complex understanding of reality, thus strengthening their social responsibility and contributing, through knowledge, to a harmonious global development.

GUNI was founded by UNESCO, the United Nations University (UNU) and the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), after the first WCHE. This year is the tenth anniversary of both the conference and GUNI, and it is within this framework that this publication aims to stimulate serious debate on the social responsibility of higher education and its relevance at the local and global context in this time of change.

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SYNTHESIS OF THE GUNI HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WORLD REPORTS

HIGHER EDUCATION AT A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION

New Dynamics for Social Responsibility

GLOBAL UNIVERSITY NETWORK FOR INNOVATION

GUNI SERIES ON THE SOCIAL COMMITMENT OF UNIVERSITIES

HIGHER EDUCATION AT A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION

New Dynamics for Social Responsibility

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PRINCIPAL EDITOR

GUNI

EDITORIAL TEAM

Cristina Escrigas	GUNI Executive Director
Bikas C. Sanyal	Guest editor of *Higher Education in the World 2007. Accreditation for Quality Assurance: What is at Stake?*
Peter Taylor	Guest editor of *Higher Education in the World 3. Higher Education: New Challenges and Emerging Roles for Human and Social Development*
Elisenda Bru	Project Assistant
Yazmín Cruz	Project Officer
Josep Lobera	Research Fellow
Francisco López-Segrera	GUNI Academic Adviser

AUTHORS OF CONTRIBUTIONS INCLUDED IN THIS SYNTHESIS

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WORLD 2006. THE FINANCING OF UNIVERSITIES

Name	Country	Institution
Akira Arimoto	Japan	Hiroshima University
Fahima Charafeddine	Lebanon	Lebanese University
Jesús M. de Miguel	Spain	University of Barcelona
Miguel Ángel Escotet	Spain	Deusto University
Carmen García-Guadilla	Venezuela	Center for Development Studies
Arthur M. Hauptman	USA	Consultant
Bruce Johnstone	USA	State University of New York
Jane Knight	Canada	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Alma Maldonado-Maldonado	Mexico	University of Arizona
Michaela Martin	France	International Institute for Educational Planning
Jan Sadlak	Romania	UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education
Jamil Salmi	Morocco	World Bank
Bikas C. Sanyal	India	International Institute for Educational Planning
Damtew Teferra	Ethiopia	Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program
Maureen Woodhall	United Kingdom	University of London
Jandhyala B. G. Tilak	India	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WORLD 2007. ACCREDITATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE: WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Name	Country	Institution
Abdel Bagi A.G. Babiker	Sudan	University of Kuwait
Colin Brock	United Kingdom	University of Oxford
José Días Sobrinho	Brazil	University of Sorocaba
Judith S. Eaton	USA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Elaine El-Khawas	USA	George Washington University
Hans J. A. van Ginkel	Netherlands	Utrecht University
Jacques Hallak	France	International Institute for Educational Planning
Jane Knight	Canada	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Michaela Martin	France	International Institute for Educational Planning
Francisco Michavila	Spain	UNESCO Chair of University Management and Policy, Technical University of Madrid
Peter Okebukola	Nigeria	Lagos State University
Muriel Poisson	France	International Institute for Educational Planning
Marco Antonio Rodrígues Días	Brazil	United Nations University
Jamil Salmi	Morocco	World Bank

Name	Country	Institution
Bikas C. Sanyal	India	International Institute for Educational Planning
Alenoush Saroyan	Canada	McGill University
Juma Shabani	Zimbabwe	UNESCO Cluster Office, Harare
Mala Singh	South Africa	The Open University
Antony Stella	India	Australian Universities Quality Agency
Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić	Serbia	UNESCO Section for Reform, Innovation and Quality Assurance
Silvia Zamorano	Spain	UNESCO Chair of University Management and Policy, Technical University of Madrid

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WORLD 3. HIGHER EDUCATION: NEW CHALLENGES AND EMERGING ROLES FOR HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Name	Country	Institution
Philip Altbach	USA	Center for International Higher Education, Boston College
Richard Bawden	Australia	University of Western Sidney
Aziza Bennani	Morocco	Ambassador of Morocco to UNESCO
L. David Brown	USA	The Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, Harvard University
Anne Corbett	United Kingdom	London School of Economics and Political Science
Jean-Marie De Ketele	Belgium	Université Catholique de Louvaine
Gerard Delanty	Ireland	University of Sussex
Boaventura de Sousa Santos	Portugal	University of Coimbra
Axel Didriksson	Mexico	Government of Mexico City
Cornelia Dragne	Canada	University of Victoria
Budd Hall	Canada	Center for Global Studies, University of Victoria
Alma Herrera	Mexico	Network of Public Macro-Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean
Leo Jansen	Netherlands	Technological University of Delft
Sheila Jasanoff	USA	Harvard University
John W. McArthur	USA	Columbia University
Andrei Marga	Romania	Babefl-Bolyai University
Goolam Mohamedbhai	Mauritius	Association of African Universities
Teboho Moja	South Africa	New York University
Manuel Ramiro Muñoz	Colombia	IESALC/UNESCO
Deepak Nayyar	India	Jawaharlal Nehru University
Deane Neubauer	USA	East-West Center
Victor Ordoñez	Philippines	East-West Center
Imanol Ordorika	Mexico	National Autonomous University of Mexico
Jeffrey D. Sachs	USA	Columbia University
Mary Stuart	UK	Kingston University
Charas Suwanwela	Thailand	Chulalongkorn University
Rajesh Tandon	India	Society for Participatory Research in Asia
Peter Taylor	UK	Institute of Development Studies
Hebe Vessuri	Venezuela	Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research
Josep Xercavins i Valls	Spain	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
Wang Yibing	China	GUNI Asia-Pacific
Federico Mayor Zaragoza	Spain	Foundation for a Culture of Peace
Mohaya Zaytoun	Egypt	Al Azhar University

GUNI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FOUNDING INSTITUTIONS

Georges Haddad	Director of the Division of Higher Education, UNESCO
Konrad Osterwalder	UNU Rector
Antoni Giró Roca	UPC Rector

GUNI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cristina Escrigas

REGIONAL OFFICES

Peter Okebukola	President GUNI Africa
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Elisenda Bru	Project Assistant
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Àngels Cortina	Network Coordinator
Yazmín Cruz	Project Officer
Jacqueline Glarner	Communications Officer
Carlos González	Head of Technological Innovation and Communication
Josep Lobera	Research Fellow
Valtencir Maldonado	Observatory Coordinator
Sònia Mascarell	Project Assistant
Mariví Ordóñez	Administrator

Josep Coll	Academic Coordinator
Francisco López-Segrera	Academic Adviser

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

ACE	American Council on Education
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALECSO	Arab League Education, Culture and Science
APHERN	Asia-Pacific Higher Education Research Network
APQN	Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network
ASAIHL	Association of Universities of Asia and Pacific
ASQUAE	Arab Society for Quality Assurance in Education
AUAP	Association of Universities of Asia and Pacific
AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
CAMES	African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education
CANQATE	Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education
CCD	Centre for Cooperation and Development
CEPES	European Centre for Higher Education
CFS	Canadian Federation of Students
CFS	Center for Financial Studies
CHE	Centre for Higher Education Development (Germany)
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CONAHEC	Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration
CUPP	Community university partnership programme (UK)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DHO	Dutch National Network for Sustainable Development in Higher Education Curricula
DSE	German Foundation for International Development
ECA	European Consortium for Accreditation
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENHR	Essential National Health Research
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ENQA	Red Europea para la Garantía de la Calidad en Educación Superior
ESIB	National Union of Students in Europe
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
FODESEP	Fondo de Desarrollo de la Educación Superior (Colombia)
FORCEM	Fundación para la Formación Continua
FUNDAPEC	Fundación APEC de Crédito Educativo (República Dominicana)
FUNDAPRO	Fundación para la Producción (Bolivia)
GATE	Global Alliance for Transnational Education
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GNP	Gross National Product
GUNI	Global University Network for Innovation
HE	Higher Education
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council of England
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAU	International Association of Universities
IAUP	International Association of University Presidents
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IESALC	International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IITE	Institute for Information Technologies in Education
INCE	Instituto Nacional de Cooperación Educativa (Venezuela)
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LRC	Lisbon Recognition Convention
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEAR	Network for Education and Academic Rights
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NUFFIC	Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OER	Open educational resources
PRE	Practice–Research Engagement
R&D	Research and development
RAWOO	Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council
RCE	Regional Centre of Expertise
REEP	Regional Environmental Education Programme (South Africa)
RIACES	Red Iberoamericana para la Acreditación de la Calidad de la Educación Superior
RIACES	Iberoamerican Network for Quality Assessment and Assurance in Higher Education
RSL	Research Service-Learning
RVCC	Recognition Validation and Certification of Competences (Portugal)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SENA	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (Colombia)
SENAI	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Industrial (Brasil)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIU	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education
SJTU	Universidad Jiao Tong de Shangai
THES	*The Times Higher Education Supplement*
TIC	Technology innovation centre
UAIN	Inter-cultural Autonomous University of the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDUAL	Latin American Union of Universities
UGC	University Grants Committee
UIE	UNESCO Institute for Education
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNU	United Nations University
UPC	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya/ Technical University of Catalonia
URACAN	University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Coast
USA	United States of America
USAID	US Agency for International Development
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WCHE	World Conference on Higher Education
WTO	World Trade Organization

Global University Network for Innovation

Higher education institutions, as well as the societies in which they operate, are currently undergoing a global transformation process in all contexts, although with specific characteristics in different parts of the world. The role of higher education institutions in society will determine the place of knowledge in facing the challenges of the world today; and at the same time, this will influence their role and opportunities in this time of change.

Higher education faces the challenge of creating and distributing socially relevant knowledge and of doing it with anticipation so as to play a proactive and committed role in the transformation and positive change of societies.

To face these challenges, *the mission of the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) is to contribute to the strengthening of higher education's role in society* through the reform and innovation of higher education policies across the world under a vision of public service, relevance and social responsibility.

There is a need to reconsider what the social contribution of higher education should be. GUNI encourages higher education institutions to redefine their role, embrace this process of transformation and strengthen their critical stance within society.

GUNI is…

GUNI is a network created in 1999 by UNESCO, the United Nations University (UNU) and the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC), which hosts its secretariat and presidency. It was founded after UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education of 1998 to give continuity to and facilitate the implementation of its main decisions.

It is currently composed of nearly 170 members from over 60 countries, including the UNESCO Chairs in Higher Education, higher education institutions, research centres and networks related to innovation and the social commitment of higher education. In each of the five world regions, GUNI has a regional office representing the network.

GUNI aims to contribute to the reform and innovation of higher education policies across the world under a vision of public service, relevance and social responsibility. In order to do so, GUNI:

- Helps bridge the gap between developed and developing countries in the field of higher education.
- Fosters cooperation between higher education institutions and society.
- Promotes the exchange of resources, innovative ideas and experiences to facilitate higher education's role for social transformation through institutional processes of change.

GUNI does…

Higher Education in the World Report

The Report is a collective work published as part of the GUNI series on the social commitment of universities. It is the result of a global and regional analysis of higher education in the world. With a specific subject chosen for each edition, the Report reflects on the key issues and challenges facing higher education and its institutions in the 21st century. It is currently published in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Universities and Social Commitment Observatory

The Observatory is a point of reference and a place for dialogue and exchange for those interested in the social responsibility of universities. It identifies, disseminates and facilitates the transfer of good practices and innovative experiences, which enrich the process transforming higher education institutions. The Observatory also acts as a resource centre, using the common goal of social responsibility as its underlying premise.

International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education

The GUNI Conference is an international forum for debate on the challenges facing higher education. Each edition of the Conference deals with the subject chosen for that year's Report. Held in Barcelona and attended by renowned experts, university leaders, academics, policymakers and practitioners from all over the world, the Conference addresses innovative proposals and ideas, as well as the results of the latest research on each subject.

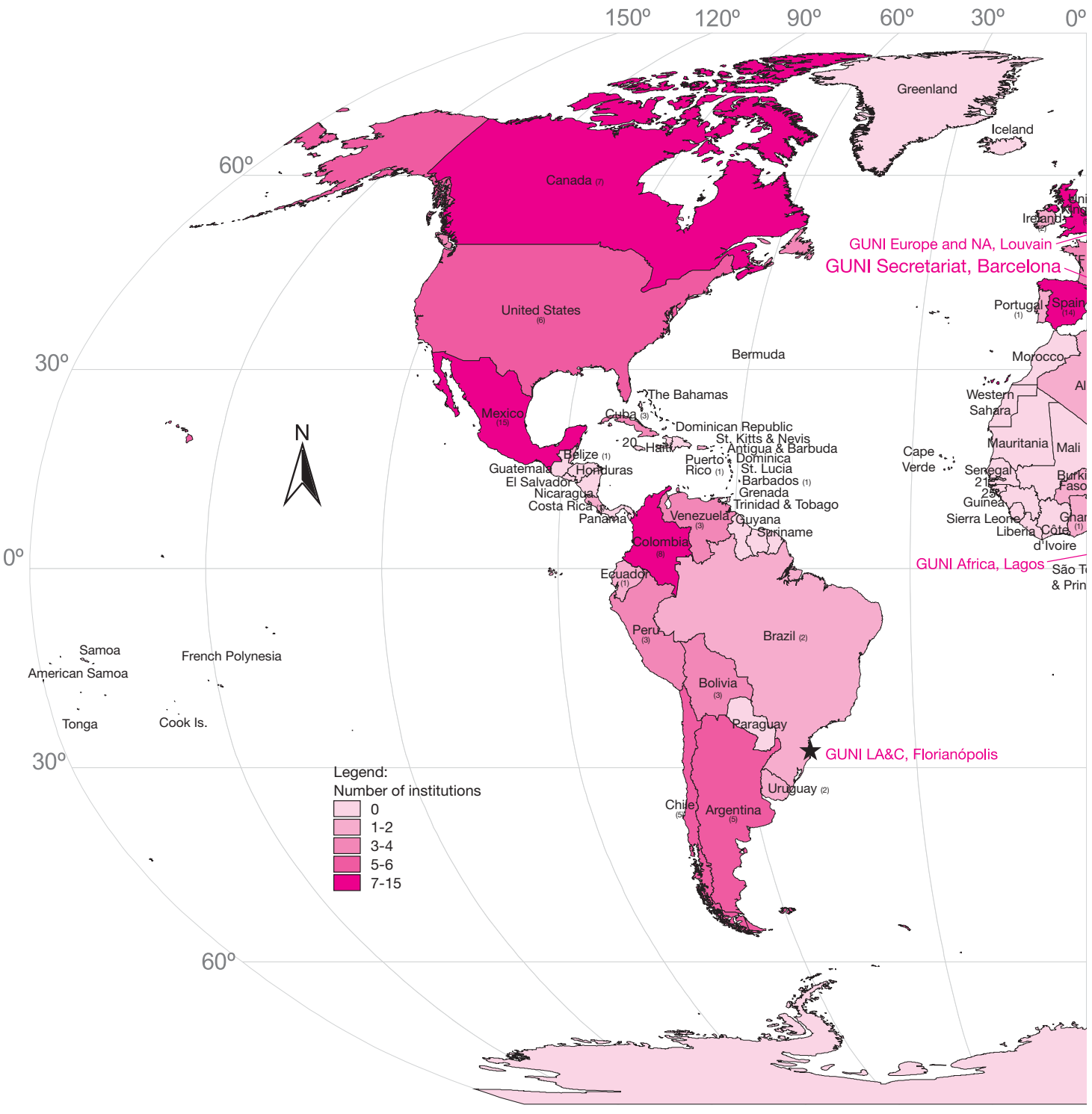
Networking

GUNI reinforces and expands its network by encouraging the dynamic involvement of its members in its activities. It fosters cooperation between higher education institutions and other actors in higher education. It also promotes debate and the creation and exchange of knowledge on higher education worldwide by means of both onsite and online activities. The website and the monthly newsletter are cornerstones of the accomplishment of this objective.

Research Projects

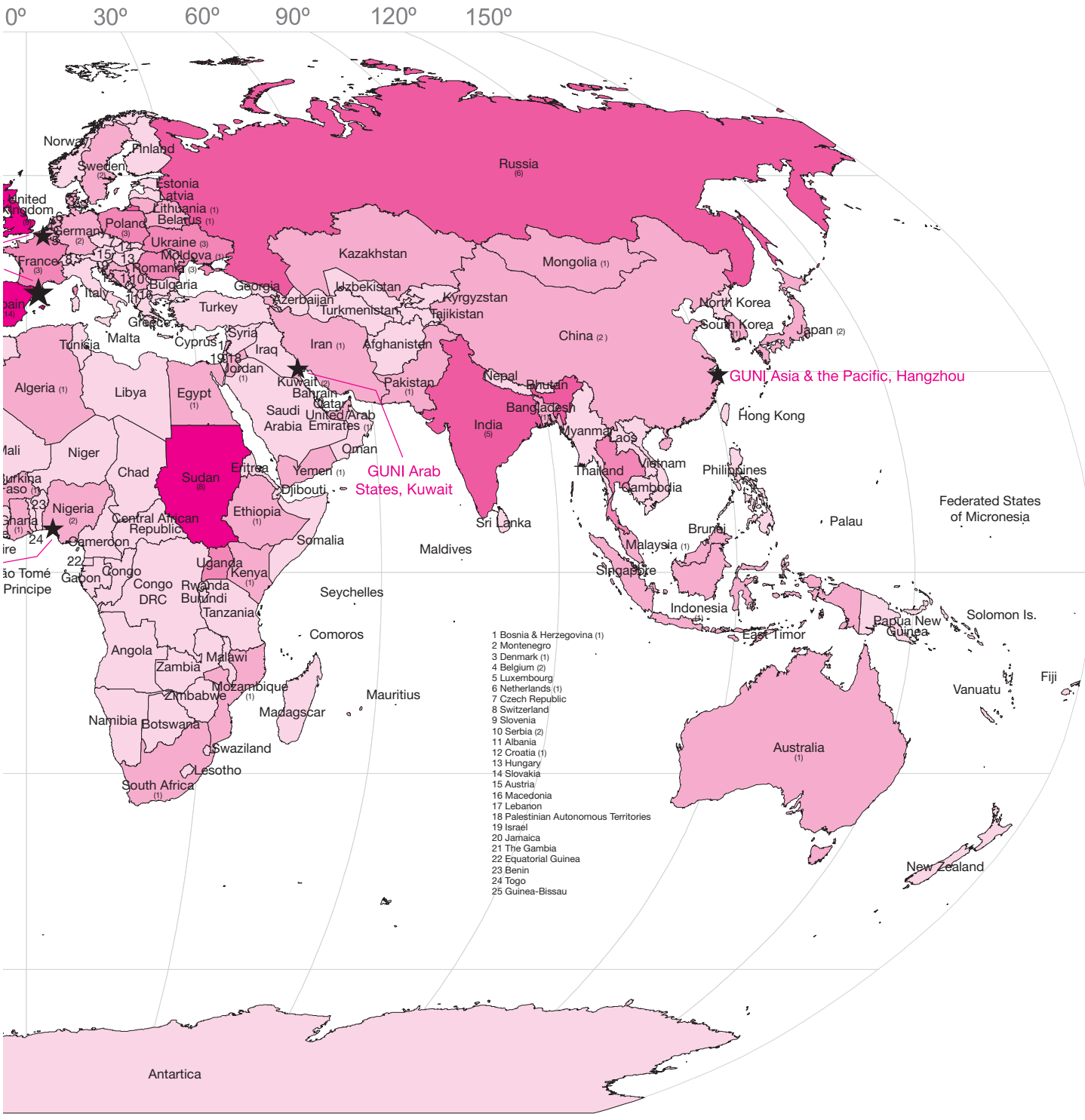
GUNI undertakes research projects on higher education for public and private not-for-profit institutions. A Delphi poll is conducted for the Report to gauge the opinion of over 200 experts including academics, university leaders, policymakers and members of civil society.

www.guni-rmies.net



Notes:
Number of members per country until March 2009
Classification method: natural breaks (Jenks optimization)
Vector layer source: ESRI Data; Projection: Robinson

MAP 1 **Number of GUNI members per country**


0º
30º
60º
90º
120º
150º
Norway
Finland
Sweden (2)
Russia (6)
Estonia
Latvia
Lithuania (1)
Belarus (1)
United Kingdom (6)
Poland (3)
Germany (2)
Ukraine (3)
Moldova (1)
France (3)
Romania (3)
Bulgaria
Italy
Georgia
Kazakhstan
Mongolia (1)
Uzbekistan
Azerbaijan
Turkmenistan
Kyrgyzstan
Tajikistan
Turkey
Greece
Malta
Cyprus
Syria
Iraq
Iran (1)
Afghanistan
China (2)
North Korea
South Korea (1)
Japan (2)
Tunisia
Algeria (1)
Libya
Egypt (1)
Jordan (1)
Kuwait (2)
Bahrain
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
United Arab Emirates (1)
Pakistan (1)
Nepal
Bhutan
Bangladesh
India (5)
Myanmar
Laos
Thailand
Vietnam
Cambodia
Philippines
Hong Kong
GUNI Asia & the Pacific, Hangzhou
GUNI Arab States, Kuwait
Oman
Yemen (1)
Djibouti
Eritrea
Sudan (6)
Chad
Niger
Nigeria (2)
Central African Republic
Cameroon
Ethiopia (1)
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Maldives
Brunei
Malaysia (1)
Singapore
Palau
Federated States of Micronesia
Indonesia (1)
East Timor
Papua New Guinea
Solomon Is.
Vanuatu
Fiji
Uganda
Kenya (1)
Congo
Gabon
Congo DRC
Rwanda
Burundi
Tanzania
Seychelles
Comoros
Angola
Zambia
Malawi
Mozambique (1)
Zimbabwe
Namibia
Botswana
Madagascar
Mauritius
Swaziland
Lesotho
South Africa (1)
Australia (1)
New Zealand
Antartica
1 Bosnia & Herzegovina (1)
2 Montenegro
3 Denmark (1)
4 Belgium (2)
5 Luxembourg
6 Netherlands (1)
7 Czech Republic
8 Switzerland
9 Slovenia
10 Serbia (2)
11 Albania
12 Croatia (1)
13 Hungary
14 Slovakia
15 Austria
16 Macedonia
17 Lebanon
18 Palestinian Autonomous Territories
19 Israel
20 Jamaica
21 The Gambia
22 Equatorial Guinea
23 Benin
24 Togo
25 Guinea-Bissau

UNESCO

The World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) that convened in Paris in 1998 gave a new momentum to policy debate on higher education. It brought together four thousand participants from 182 countries and provided a comprehensive forum for examining policies. Education ministers were joined by other stakeholders, recognizing that governments could no longer manage alone the most radical renewal of higher education they have ever attempted.

The 1998 Conference adopted a *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action,* accompanied by an Action Plan. Its conceptual framework drew on a set of key imperatives: broadening access to higher education – understood as both a public good and a human right – as a key driver of development; promoting reforms of higher education at system and institutional levels to enhance quality, relevance and efficiency; and securing adequate resources and funding – both public and private – to cope with the increasingly varied demands placed on higher education by its different stakeholders.

GUNI, the Global University Network for Innovation, was established in 1999 by UNESCO, the United Nations University and the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC) in Barcelona, which houses its Secretariat. The promotion of the recommendations of the 1998 WCHE is its core mission with a special focus on the social responsibility of higher education.

Since 1998, as a result of new trends, the extent of the transformation of the global landscape of higher education has far surpassed the forecasts made at the first WCHE.

First, *mass higher education* is now the key driver in the worldwide development of the sector. Student enrolments are burgeoning: 144 million tertiary students were enrolled in higher education in 2006, 51 million more than in 1999 – a staggering increase.

Most countries aspire to join the knowledge society by following the trajectory of developed economies, which consider age participation rates in higher education of 40–50% as necessary for sustainable development. Unfortunately, many countries in the developing world are far from this target. Government action alone cannot meet the rising demand. Indeed, most government budgets for higher education are declining steadily on a per capita basis.

Second, burgeoning demand has encouraged *diversification* in the ways higher education is provided and funded. Community colleges and vocational schools are making higher education more accessible, especially to working adults and those in remote rural areas. Open, distance and e-learning are developing rapidly – where there were only ten open universities in the world in 1988, India alone had more than ten by 2005. Private higher education (including for-profit institutions) is now the fastest growing element of the sector and already accounts for one third of global enrolments and as much as 70% of enrolments in some regions (for example East Asia).

Third, growing *student mobility* is another dominant trend: 2.4 million students went abroad in 2004 – a threefold increase since 1980. African students are proportionately the most mobile, with one out of every sixteen studying abroad. The *Global Student Mobility 2025 Report* predicts that demand for international education will increase to 7.2 million students by 2025.

Fourth, *cross-border higher education* now involves the movement of programmes and institutions as well as students. China saw a 9-fold increase in foreign programmes between 1995 and 2003 and by 2000 more Singaporean undergraduate students accessed a foreign programme in Singapore than went abroad. Information and communications technology (ICT) is likely to increase the reach and impact of cross-border higher education.

Fifth, *quality assurance* has acquired a higher profile both nationally and internationally.

These trends raise a number of policy issues for governments and institutions. Are private higher education, distance education and cross-border provision the answers to expanding access to higher education in the developing world? What policies can governments and institutions adopt to ensure that these new providers make a positive contribution? As the nation-state loses its monopoly over higher education provision, how does it ensure that higher education is socially responsible?

This is the backdrop to the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education in Paris in July 2009. It will be a global platform for innovative thinking that will review progress, analyse the emerging dynamics and their policy implications, and recommend concrete actions to meet national development objectives and individual aspirations. To give the event a truly global scope, preparatory regional conferences have addressed specific local concerns. Their proposals will enrich the debates at the World Conference.

Under the overarching theme *The New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research for Societal Change and Development* the 2009 Conference will examine the role of higher education in addressing major global challenges. What is the nature of societies' commitment to higher education and what social responsibilities does it have in return? Promoting excellence to accelerate Africa's development will be a special focus.

Three broad sub-themes will guide the debates at the Conference: Internationalization, regionalization and globalization; Equity, access and quality; and Learning, research and innovation. Each theme will be looked at from the perspectives of: public and private roles and responsibilities; the emergence of new models and approaches; the opportunities presented by ICTs and open and distance learning; the implications for funding and investment; and issues of governance and management.

UNESCO is indebted to GUNI for making a significant contribution to the 2009 WCHE debates through this impressive volume. It offers an invaluable service to all participants by providing a thoughtful synthesis of its three previous *Higher Education in the World* reports on the financing of universities (2006), accreditation for quality assurance (2007), and higher education's emerging roles in human and social development (2008).

Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić
UNESCO Higher Education Division
Executive Secretary: 2009 WCHE

The current strict international regime for the protection of intellectual property rights could pre-empt or stifle the development of domestic technological capabilities in weaker countries. Taken together, the rules and conditions of the new international agenda are bound to curb the use of industrial policy, technology policy, trade policy and financial policy as strategic forms of intervention to foster industrialization in developing countries. Public science policies, while secondary to the aforementioned policies, could help foster the domestic research and development activities needed to build a comprehensive national scientific and technological capacity. Any rethinking of scientific research and development must involve a balanced view of the significance of state intervention, institutions and politics in science and the critical role of good governance.

KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION

There is broad agreement that mankind faces three main challenges in these early years of the 21st century: freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to sustain their lives on this planet. Science, technology and innovation are central both to the origins of these three millennium challenges and to the prospects for handling them successfully. They are also increasingly perceived as linked in complex ways to the current unsustainable development trajectories. Why is it so difficult to change course?

The economic drivers and financial constraints of science are huge. Despite the importance of sustainability and the centrality of science and technology in the strategies for achieving it, there is a great imbalance in the resources and attention devoted to putting research into the service of the aims of sustainable development.

Economics is not the only thing standing in the way of much-needed change. As recently put by Ravetz (2006), reflecting on Kuhn's insight in his theory of scientific revolutions, 'the inertia of those intellectual structures that define and regulate our thoughts – be they called paradigms, frameworks or mental models – must be recognized by whoever would wish to change them'. If science is to address sustainability problems, it must be produced in a way that allows it to be linked more easily and rapidly to action communities. It is very likely that it will be reformulated and even transformed through multiple dialogues and interactions among the individuals, groups and institutions that generate and ultimately apply new scientific and technological knowledge. The implementation of new knowledge and technical capacities by different social actors – including governments, natural resource managers, industry and society in general – should not be a final phase in a research programme but rather an integral part of it, from the very early definition of the problem.

Moreover, we must insist on the critical importance of linking the various scales of interaction. Development specialists often mention this limited understanding of multi-scale interactions as one of the main obstacles to progress. New organizational models of international inter- and transdisciplinary assessments – such as those by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) and the Arctic Council (2004) – open up new possibilities for integrating knowledge through a wide range of disciplines and development experiences with the involvement of an extensive set of stakeholders.

Science has been assumed to be largely foreign to both economic and political concerns. The practice of democracy in the world today has tended to distance citizens from professionalized political instances. Excessive reliance on experts' opinions contributes to depoliticization and further removes citizens from political participation. However, scientific knowledge and expertise are more crucial than ever in democracy. This having been said, it is also true that the 'knowledge problem' has emerged as one of today's four major governance problems, in terms of the difficulty in understanding and correctly assessing complex societal issues, as well as the causal linkages between resources and objectives. Scientists have opened Pandora's box and the powers unleashed require deft guidance and societal control to prevent irreparable damage and ensure welcome benefits to mankind. A new politics of knowledge is emerging in which political goals and economic interests have to come to terms with universal norms and values.

7.2 COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Imanol Ordorika[27]

Globalization has substantially modified the nature of contemporary nation-states as the principal organizers of capital accumulation and as bearers and creators of national identities. The nation-state's progressive withdrawal from higher education, made evident by the reduction in public

resources, has led to an increase in competition for individual and/or institutional resources from the state and vis-à-vis the market. Consequently, the traditional autonomy of academic institutions and their professionals from nation-states and markets has been significantly reduced.

THE ECONOMIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

The fiscal crisis of universities has been accompanied, both as a cause and as a consequence, by a redefinition of the meanings, goals and practices of higher education. Ideas of universities as broad cultural societal projects or as institutions that focus on the production of public goods have moved into a marginal or solely discursive realm. These notions have been substituted by a renewed emphasis on the links between higher education and markets, by a schema of 'entrepreneurial universities' (Clark, 1998), by notions of excellence (Readings, 1996), by the centrality of managerial concepts and goals, such as 'productivity' or 'efficiency', and by the increasing privatization of educational supply and financing (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997).

PRODUCTIVITY AND THE HIERARCHICAL FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The international field of higher education is uneven, hierarchical and permanently contested. The networking and global interacting potential of institutions is strengthened if they adhere to the dominant productivity model. Research productivity is fundamental in establishing a university as a prominent institution at international and local levels. Positions within this global market are mediated by comparative rankings of research performance or university status (for example the Shanghai Jiao Tong and *The Times Higher Education Supplement* world university rankings). Worldwide attention to university rankings is a sign of the new global market. Comparisons reflect and reinforce the structure of these markets as a system of power. The concern of public officials and university administrators is how to reach higher levels of research performance with the most efficient levels of investment in material and human resources, that is, how to increase academic productivity.

HEGEMONY AND THE NARROWED ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

University rankings show a highly unequal distribution of resources and status. Ranking measures themselves reproduce and strengthen this pattern of domination. They give the advantage to wealthy nations that invest in science-based research and benefit English-speaking nations because English is now the only global research language. More significantly, the nation- and state-building commitments of national and local universities are outside the scope of international performance and productivity standards for higher education. Universities' orientation towards local constituencies and their impact on local, regional and national development is difficult to measure and goes beyond traditional criteria of academic performance and research productivity. International trends drive universities away from local commitments and diminish their role as state-building institutions.

This model is very different from that which has developed in most nations, especially in Latin America, which has historically emphasized the contribution of the university to national democracy and placed the research university at the centre of national politics and culture. It also differs from the more homogeneous systems of Western Europe, sustained by state investment, in which all research universities enjoy similar status and access to resources.

DIVERSITY AND COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY

In spite of great similarities between systems and institutions in the world, there is no single, unifying idea of the university. On the contrary, diverse and distinct major university traditions operate at the national, meta-national or regional levels. In this global era in which models, ideas and policies are freely communicated across national boundaries, one would expect these different traditions to contribute collectively to the development of international higher education. This is not the case, however, for the hegemony of the North American model, and its 'idea of a university' exercises a powerful and often disruptive influence. Trends towards global standardization partly reflect the emergence of common guidelines and systems in higher education but they also reveal cultural and material differences and inequities. Moreover, a narrowly defined idealization of the North American elite research model of higher education – which corresponds to a virtually unique relationship between university and industry, existing only in the United States – becomes harmful and dangerous when it is romanticized and transposed to the rest of the world.

In order to build alternatives and expand the notion of the contributions of higher education to society, there is a need to be aware of the homogenizing effects of

productivity-driven policies, their impact on the narrowing of university goals and their detrimental consequences on the social responsibilities of universities. Through a process that we can label *marketization* or *commodification*, higher education has been aligned to the requirements and practices of diverse markets both at national and international levels. In this global context, research universities have been integrated, willingly or not, into a global market with a centrally established system of assessment through international rankings. These international rankings promote, reproduce and reify research performance and productivity indicators as the only sources of value on which to base societal appreciation for higher education institutions and academic work.

Standardized measures of academic output become an international homogenizing force that throws universities with diverse origins, traditions and roles into a common process of competition in uneven conditions and with unequal possibilities for success. In this way, the global higher education market works as a powerful mechanism for reproducing inequities between different types of universities that come from diverse regions or countries and have extremely differentiated access to intellectual and material resources. The distinctive character of national systems and universities is lost, giving way to uprooted institutions that qualify badly in international rankings and also have a diminished impact on the national and local realities to which they should respond.

The emergence of an international higher education market constitutes a significant challenge for national research universities: how to participate in the global realm of colleges and universities on the basis of their own nature and distinctive character and to avoid diluting these in the face of hegemonic models and dominant international guidelines. Alignment and homogenization must be confronted by reestablishing different traditions and university models.

The diversity of regional and national contexts and of university traditions makes it impossible to propose one single alternative to the restrictive market-driven hegemonic model. However, a common theme is the reconstruction of societal appreciation of higher education, based on ascribing greater value to the contributions of higher education to society beyond market interactions and the fulfilment of administrative practices. One possibility is to think about recreating the university along the lines of the following broad set of social commitments and responsibilities:

1. To provide a privileged space for relating global trends to national identities, building up local social understanding and promoting interaction between diverse cultures and beliefs, ethnic groups, migrant and resident nationalities, genders, social classes and other societal groups.
2. To act as the only public institution that promotes reflective understanding and grounded critique of contemporary society and its relations with the environment.
3. To bridge the gap between specialized knowledge and society as a whole, in the context of the knowledge society and the information economy, as it is the only existing institution in contemporary society capable of doing so.
4. To act as the main institution in recreating and constructing contemporary shared values and societal understanding, and serve as an essential space for shaping diverse constituencies for a broad set of interactions within society and with the environment (these include training for work and employment but go beyond these objectives).
5. To act as a fundamental establishment for the production of knowledge, addressing a broad range of societal concerns, demands, and problems in diverse areas, including but moving beyond the narrow reach of production requirements and market demands.

In the face of a hierarchical field of domination and a hegemonic understanding of what constitutes a successful university in contemporary society, the challenge for peripheral universities is how to preserve their diversity of traditions and responsibilities through a broad commitment to society. It is along these lines that a wide variety of alternatives should be developed, recreating multiple concepts of the university rooted in distinct traditions and historical conditions.

7.3 THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH

Charas Suwanwela[28]

Societies throughout the world vary greatly in their ability to produce and use knowledge for human and social development. Today, the great expansion of knowledge and its role in globalization and economic and social development has progressively widened the knowledge gap and increased inequality among nations. Different societies undoubtedly require different sets of knowledge and research.

Research as the production of knowledge must include both new-to-the-world discoveries and inventions and