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2022/2023 Activity Report for the International Association of Universities (28 April 2023)

Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development Global Cluster: [SDG 4 Subcluster](#)

The SDG 4 Subcluster with its members

- Charles University, Czech Republic;
- Earth Charter at the University of Peace, Costa Rica;
- Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (since 2022), Norway;
- International Islamic University Malaysia;
- Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany;
- Rhodes University, South Africa; and
- York University, Canada (coordinating university).

continues their peer-to-peer learning through ongoing conversation, information exchange, and collaboration on various levels and aims to create synergies through involvement with IAU and UNESCO.

- In September 2022, Robert J. Didham (INN) presented on “Strengthening the quality and relevance in teacher education through integrating interdisciplinary approaches on ESD” in the Joint Seminar “Bridging Ideas between Asia and Europe for Promoting Education for Sustainable Development in Higher Education”, co-organized by University of Ljubljana, Slovenia and Okayama University, Japan and supported by Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MESS), Slovenia and Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Japan. The event was part of the JSPS-funded Core-to-Core programme on *establishing advanced research networks of teacher education for ESD to achieve the SDGs*.
- Representatives from Inland University Norway, International Islamic University Malaysia and York University attended the IAU General Conference in October 2022 and participated in the IAU HESD Cluster side meeting.
- In November 2022, the second [Sustainable on the Go Conference](#) was hosted by York University with IAU, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and Okayama University as strategic partners with an extensive [youth engagement program](#) in advance of the event. The learning are now publicly available on a website for those who consider how to create approaches to meaningful engagement with young voices. The following partners from IAU and the SDG 4 Subcluster spoke at the Conference: Charles Hopkins (York), Deepika Joon (Leuphana), Dzul kifli bin Abdul Razak (IIUM), Hilligje van’t Land (IAU) Robert J. Didham (INN), Zainal Abidin Sanusi (IIUM). All SDG 4 Subcluster members attended the conference and participated in a Subcluster side meeting.
- In November 2022, at the Annual Conference of the Norwegian Research Network on Sustainability and Education (NABU) hosted at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), Robert J. Didham (INN) organized and moderated an international panel session on “Context, Situatedness, Relevance and Transferability in Education for Sustainable Development”. The panel brought together four international experts in education for sustainable development (including Ingrid Schudel from Rhodes University) who have each worked with unique approaches to actively engage learners in the exploration of sustainable development within their own contexts, communities, and daily lives. The panellists considered the potential transferability of their ESD practices to other settings and contexts, and they discussed the universal attributes that frame the transformative learning potential of ESD.

- In January 2023, partners from the Earth Charter at the University of Peace, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia and York University responded to [UNESCO's Call for Think-Pieces on Governance and a New Social Contract for Education](#) with submitting an article on ethical leadership.
- The [UNITWIN Network on Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) and Social Transformation](#), hosted by Leuphana University in conjunction with the University of Peace, Rhodes University and York University, launched their first applied project on April 2023. [Politics4Future](#) is a multi-cultural, facilitated pilot online course for future teachers and community activists. The curriculum with synchronous and asynchronous elements is designed now for up to 60 students from diverse backgrounds and could be scaled up further.
- The SDG 4 Subcluster continues to pursue a multilayered approach, using various networks to optimize existing resources, improve visibility, and seek further opportunities for engagement and funding. Where partners attend conferences, side meetings are held and conversation and exchange is ongoing among partners and with IAU, e.g., during the Transforming Education Pre-Summit in June 2022, during the UNESCO Chairs Conference in November 2022, and the Earth Charter Conference in December 2022. Partners create further visibility through statements, speaking engagements, and sharing perspectives on the role of higher education towards the SDGs where opportunities arise.

Additional SDG 4 Subcluster Coordinator Report: York University, Canada

With the [University-wide Academic Plan \(UAP\) 2020-2025](#) in place, York University is committed to their whole-institution approach. Being placed 33rd worldwide in the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking, York continues to expand the [pan-university approach to the SDGs](#) with:

- A [second generation of Provostial Fellows](#) focusing on the SDGs, an [SDG toolkit](#) to support teaching and learning, and a pan-university [SDG Community of Practice](#) and an SDG Innovation Hub funded by the [Academic Innovation Fund \(AIF\)](#).
- [Bold investments into their Sustainability Office](#) including establishing the role of a Chief Sustainability Officer to renew the institutional sustainability strategy.
- Efforts to consult and release the first university-wide [Decolonizing, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(DEDI\) Strategy](#) as a community-informed strategy.
- Further faculty strategies to implement the UAP at the faculty level, such as the [Strategic Plan 2023-2027](#) of the Faculty of Education.
- A [new internationalization and global engagement strategy](#) 2022-2027.

Additional SDG 4 Subcluster Member Report: Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

- During the 2022-23 teaching year, at the lead of the Rector's office, INN University has engaged in cross-faculty discussions towards preparing an institutional sustainability strategy and to enhance the university's impact towards the achievement of the SDGs. In 2022, former vice-rector Jens Uwe Korten was appointed into the new position of project manager for sustainability and green transition and leads the development of this new strategy.
- In October 2022, INN University established a new centre, CREDS - Center for research on digitalization and sustainability, with the aim to contribute with relevant and new insights into how businesses can adapt to the sustainable and digital development expected of society today.

- In 2023, INN University launched a new bachelors program in *Sustainability Economics*. In addition, a diploma program (of 60 ECTS) is also offered under a flexible model over a 2-year period as a continuing professional development opportunity.
- In 2023, INN University also launched a new bachelors programme in *Sustainable Tourism and Event Management*.
- In the fall of 2023, INN University will re-launch its continuing professional development study programme on *Sustainability Leadership for people, planet and mutual prosperity* which targets mid- to senior-level business managers with flexible, net-based study programme (of 30 ECTS). This study programme was originally piloted in 2021-22, but underwent a further round of development during the 2022-23 teaching year.

Additional SDG 4 Subcluster Member Report: Leuphana University, Lüneburg, Germany

- The [Conference Week, 2023](#), which is one of the main UNESCO Chair on HESD activity, was organized on the theme “ Our Turn” in March 2023, which collected students, actors from society, politics and business together. The main conversation centered on how the debates of the turning point change our possibilities to think about the future and ideas and initiatives for designing an open society with a consistent earth policy in mind.
- Prof. Daniel Lang delivered a well-attended [talk](#) on transdisciplinary learning to foster local SDG implementation as part of German UNESCO Chair lecture series in January 2023
- Dr Lydia Kater- Wettstädt delivered a video presentation on ESD implementation in Germany for Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) for teacher education for sustainable development in schools in China. HSF also partners with York University’s UNESCO Chair.
- Leuphana University hosted Prof. Charles Hopkins for [Transdisciplinary Fellowship](#) at Institute for Sustainable Development and Learning in March 2023. The fellowship is geared towards understanding transdisciplinary principles towards ESD.