oriented indicators as they are highly dependent on their governments in a struggle for public resources. These, in turn, fully depend on successful external evaluations, global ranking results (which are mainly based on quantitative data extracted from several monopolistic commercial publishing platforms, which, unfortunately, sometimes have nothing in common with a real impact on communities and society.

In this complex context, the new UNESCO Futures of Education report is timely and promising as it returns to the principles of a humanistic socio-cultural education paradigm, which in the pre-pandemic period in many countries was unfortunately dominated by the economic neoliberal paradigm. This new social contract proposed by UNESCO takes us back to the understanding of education as a common public good, as a fundamental human right. It gives us reason to hope that it will initiate certain mind-shifts within our states and governments regarding the HE sector's broadening missions, it's relevance and importance to societies.

Global challenges need a global response. International organizations, such as UNESCO, IAU and other global education networks, certainly have a fundamental role to play in convincing leadership to engage more forcefully in global cooperation in education and the sciences, in the implementation of a new social contract together with worldwide academic communities and other stakeholders, and in creating new instruments, open collaborative platforms to synergize resources globally. They will help us build more peaceful, just and sustainable futures for all.

09 How well do Universities Collaborate to Build Democratic Inclusive Societies?
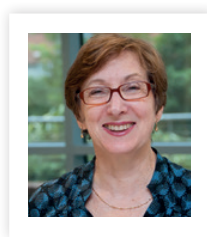
by **Ellen Hazelkorn**, *Joint Managing Partner, BH Associates & Professor Emeritus, Technological University Dublin, Ireland*

According to Bergin *et al* [1] "… helping to build democratic and inclusive societies is one of the indispensable missions of higher education". Achieving this requires that universities work "*with* their communities and function… as democratic anchor institutions…". But how well does higher education carry out this goal? One way to think about this issue is to examine the way in which universities collaborate with other colleges and higher education institutions at home and abroad.

Scientific exchange and collaboration

Universities have been places where scholars meet to exchange ideas and search for knowledge and understanding within and between societies for centuries. By the 19th century, academic networks were becoming a normal part of scientific endeavour; universities were encouraged to join them and to support and encourage faculty, student and research mobility and collaborations. The 20th and 21st centuries have seen a dramatic increase in the number and type of university associations and networks, publications and projects, research institutions and exchange programmes.

The intensification of international collaboration is best illustrated by the Human Genome Project formally launched in October 1990. It remains the world's largest biological project involving twenty universities and research centres in the US, UK, Japan, France, Germany and China. Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 has seen a burst of activity as universities align their strategies with the SDGs as showcased by their submissions to the *Times Higher Education Impact Rankings*. During this time of pandemic, high levels of collaboration were also evident in the search for a vaccine which involved many different research teams from around the world, facilitated by early publication of a machine-readable genome of the COVID-19 virus by Chinese scientists [2].

The transformation of education and research from an institutional and national based system to a highly internationalised higher education and global science system has been enabled by collaboration. The past decades have seen a phenomenal growth in the number and type of exchange and study programmes, joint degree programmes, research projects and an expansive network of collaborating scientists. Joint authorship between scholars in different countries has become a key indicator of world classness. Today, more than 60 countries are actively engaged in global science [3].

Is collaboration enhancing elite advantage?

However as international collaboration expands so does the distance between collaborating scientists. As Tijssen [4], and others have shown, researchers are more likely to focus on international partnerships rather than local ones, and to collaborate with large, international companies rather than local SMEs. According to Kwiek [5], individual scientists pursue "collaboration with the best of their peers, regardless of location". Indeed, elite universities collaborate primarily with other elite universities, and primarily with universities located in the global north. As Calderon asserts, "not all university networks stand equal". Networks comprising high ranked

> ❝ The world around us may be changing but academic culture remains focused on elite models. Too often universities engage in civic-mission-washing rather than creating genuine partnerships of mutual respect and benefit. What needs to change? ❞

research-intensive and well-resourced universities dominate whereas the global south is poorly represented.

There are many good examples of partnerships between universities and schools, TVET and other institution of higher education. There are examples also of joint programmes and progression routes. However, many of these initiatives are prompted by predatory desires by universities to hedge against demographic and enrolment decline rather than genuine partnerships. Further education and TVET colleges complain that universities are encroaching on their educational mission. Likewise bi-lateral arrangements between schools and university simply reduce choice by tying students to a single or small set of universities.

There are also good examples of engagement activities; although too often the definition of what constitutes good practice is defined by the universities themselves [6]. Too often universities use their public affairs offices to simply broadcast what they are doing rather than genuinely partner with their communities.

Going Forward

The world around us may be changing but academic culture remains focused on elite models. Too often universities engage in civic-mission-washing rather than creating genuine partnerships of mutual respect and benefit. What needs to change?

A key message is centred around ensuring civic mission is an intentional and holistic process rather than a collection of different activities [7]. The emphasis should be on creating public value for society and the economy by building an education and innovation eco-system with capacity for sustainable collaboration between all educators, business, government and civil society. This will also help ensure greater coherence and integration between different education levels and types to develop learning opportunities for students of all abilities, ages, ethnicities and talents. Ultimately, in everything universities do, there is an essential responsibility to recognise that liberal democratic societies require people who are active, informed citizens.

10 Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: Pathway to more Empowered Global Citizenship
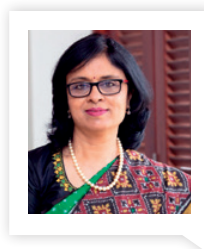
by **Vidya Yeravdekar**, *Pro Chancellor, Symbiosis International University, India*

The present-day globalized world is one that presents a paradox: as the boundaries that separated countries and cultures get relegated into the background, one witnesses increasing uniformity as well as growing diversity. As

> ❝ Higher education empowers people to undo the mindset and attitudes that result in a polarized, fragmented worldview, by creating an intellectual space in which diverse perspectives can be nurtured. Thus, higher education can be an indispensable instrument of socio-economic equality, cultural inclusion, conflict resolution, and peace building. ❞

the globalization process creates growing impulsion to achieve competitive advantages, higher education assumes a key role in preparing the human resource base to meet the needs of the contemporary knowledge society. Higher education institutions, as core knowledge-generating and -disseminating organizations, must realize that internationalization of higher education is a transformative force that will lead us to a global knowledge society. Institutions need to prepare students to compete in the global graduate job market, while also addressing the responsibilities that come with being global citizens.

We are moving towards a world that is a complex network of inter-dependent links, where citizens understand that their lives are intertwined and that their attitudes, choices, and actions have global implications. In an increasingly globalized world, socio-economic engagements rely on dialogue and communication across diverse populations, necessitating interculturality. Growing global interconnections will result in the increasing presence of multiculturally diverse academic and professional settings and teams. In this context, intercultural competence assumes enormous significance. Put simply, it is the capacity to function effectively across diverse cultures. It allows one to communicate and engage with people from different cultural backgrounds, at home or abroad. Thus, intercultural competence is an orientation that allows one to adapt to a globalized world.

The globalized world is a diverse community. A dimension of this diversity are the stark inequities that beset the global population. Acknowledging disparities in access to resources and fundamental rights is a crucial first step in solving global challenges. Inequalities across gender, race, income, access to technology etc. affect access to quality education, and conversely, the attainment of education goes a long way impacting the degree to which one is affected by socio-economic inequalities. More recently, exploitative divisions across the global North and South have gained focus in global studies. This raises discussions around ways to bridge the North-South divide as well as increase South-South cooperation.

An important element of global citizenship is culture: how does one view one's own and other's culture? How does one gain understanding of other's culture while viewing one's own as "one among many"? How does one maintain inter-subjectivity while engaging with someone from another culture? Here,