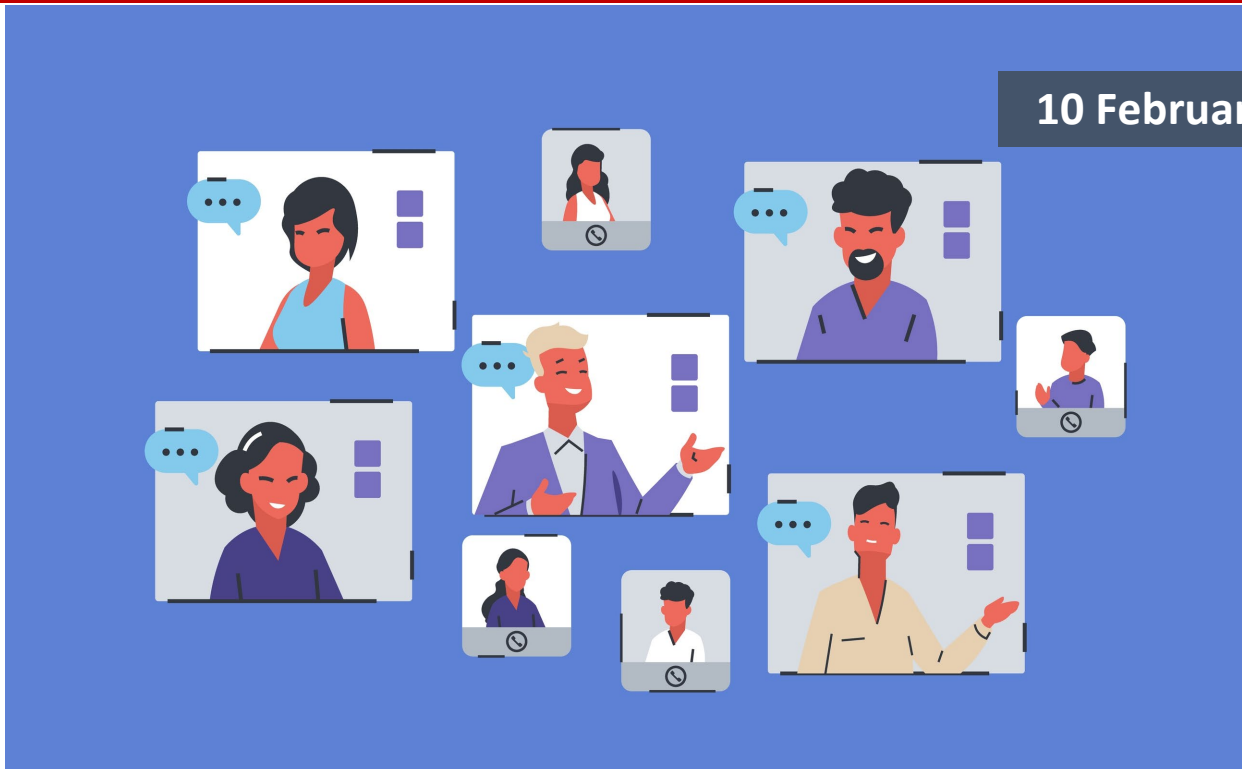


10 February 2022



Organizational arrangements:

Date and time: Thursday, 10 February 2022, 14:00 – 15:00 (CET)

Format: Zoom webinar. Prior registration is required.

https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5m4g2Nw5TH2xdBVBnomkGg

Target audience: Policy makers and higher education stakeholders

Languages: English/French, with simultaneous interpretation

Background

Despite significant progress made in the last decade, millions around the world are still denied their right to education, and learning opportunities continue to be unequally distributed. This trend impacts all educational levels, including that of higher education.

Vulnerable groups are most at risk, notably refugees and displaced populations, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Indigenous populations and students from rural backgrounds, among others. These groups remain underrepresented among higher education students, with only 5% of eligible refugee youth enrolled in higher education, for example. The Covid-19 pandemic has widened inequalities and placed a financial burden on many higher education students, leading to a 3.5% dropout rate.

To make quality higher education accessible for all, it is essential to develop and implement inclusive and equitable policies and programmes that remove barriers to participation and achievement for all learners, regardless of their gender, sex, ability, ethnicity or socio-economic background and eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment. This is particularly important at a time of growing demand for higher education, with enrolment expected to double by 2030, and increasing pressure on

higher education systems to *leave no one left behind*.

UNESCO's [Global Convention on Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education](#) aims to facilitate academic mobility across regions, improve quality and enhance inter-university cooperation. It is a paramount tool for inclusion in higher education, with specific provisions on the recognition of qualifications for refugees and displaced persons. UNESCO has taken this commitment one step further through the [UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants \(UQP\)](#), piloted in Iraq and Zambia, to facilitate these groups' access to education and the labour market.

Objectives and Agenda

This is the fourth in the series of Higher Education Conversations in the leadup to the 3rd World Conference on Higher Education (Barcelona, 18 – 20 May 2022). It aims to bring together policy makers and higher education stakeholders to discuss how higher education must transform itself to ensure equity and the equal distribution of opportunities for all, particularly vulnerable groups.

Key questions to be examined:

- How can different vulnerable/marginalized populations be supported in accessing and receiving quality higher education?
- What equity policies are necessary for both governments and higher education institutions to support more inclusive approaches in higher education?
- What does inclusive higher education entail? How do factors such as language, environment, the type of knowledge and research, and physical vs. online participation influence inclusion?
- What are the benefits of recognizing the qualifications of refugees and displaced persons, both for the individual and for host communities at large?
- How can higher education institutions ensure the right to higher education for all with an overarching human-rights approach, while also addressing the unique needs of different marginalized peoples?

Thursday, 10 February 2022	
15:00 – 15:05	Opening Ms Karen Mundy, Director of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
15:05 – 15:25	Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Jamil Salmi, Global Tertiary Education Expert• Mr Vivian Rath, Adjunct Teaching Fellow at Trinity College Dublin & Research Officer at the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability• Ms Manal Stulgaitis, Education Officer, UNHCR• Mr Andreas Snildal, Senior Programme Officer for the UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants, UNESCO Moderator: Ms Vanja Gutović, Secretary to the Global Convention and the co-Secretary to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, UNESCO
15:25 – 15:55	Question and Answer session
15:55 – 16:00	Wrap up

For upcoming discussions, please visit: <https://en.unesco.org/news/higher-education-conversations>