
World Access to Higher Education Day 2018



DECEMBER 20



The first World Access to Higher Education Day

With the support of over 100 organisations from over 35 countries, the first World Access to Higher Education Day (WAHED) was held on the 28th November 2018.

The aim of WAHED was to act as a catalyst for global, regional and local action to address inequalities in access to higher education across the world.

WAHED is led by the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) which the professional organization for access to HE in the UK and supported by NCUK (The University Consortium).

By 2030, countries should provide equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and higher education, including university – UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal

Research shows that in 90% of the countries in the world where we have evidence, those from low-income and marginalized backgrounds are less likely to progress to higher education.

We would like to thank the following organisations in particular for their support for the first World Access to Higher Education Day:

- Asia-Europe Foundation
- British Council
- EdX
- National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE)
- University World News
- University of the People
- Walter Ollor Foundation
- NCUK - The University Consortium
- National Institution of Educational Planning and Administration University of the People
- University of the Western Cape

What did the first WAHED achieve?

This is the first WAHED and we know that what defines HE inequality is its entrenched nature. This is a long-term challenge. Undoubtedly though WAHED was a catalyst for action, and across the world because of WAHED work to address HE inequality moved forward:

The WAHED Campaign – energising the world

Social media is at the forefront of campaigning today and the evidence of engagement with WAHED is clear here, with over 35,000 impressions on the WAHED Twitter account (@WorldAccessHE) on the 28th November, and over 500 posted tweets from over 500 countries.

The Foreign Office's Chevening Awards programme Tweeted:

“For Dawud 'education is everything' but due to the civil conflict in Somalia, he was unable to access the higher education he desired without a #Chevening scholarship. Chevening supports World Access to Higher Education Day #WAHED2018”

Higher Education Authority Access Tweeted:

“The first @WorldAccessHE day took place this week. The @HEAaccess in Ireland is implementing the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-19 to ensure the student body reflects the diversity and social mix of the Irish population @hea_irl #access #WAHED2018”

The University of Southern Queensland tweeted:

“Tomorrow #USQ hosts the inaugural WAHED day. Universities and education providers, communities, industry, and government will come together to focus on the role institutions play in addressing, whilst also contributing to, the issue of access. #WAHED2018”

“As the Austrian Federal Minister for Education, Science and Research, I am convinced that equal opportunities in education build one important column for a successful educational system. Therefore, we approved the national strategy on the social dimension in higher education in 2017 by putting a special focus on equal access opportunities to higher education for students from all backgrounds. The WAHED initiative once more emphasizes the global importance of this topic.”

(Heinz Faßmann, Austrian Federal Minister of Education, Science and Research).

Our Keynote Conferences – moving the access debate forward

UK: The UK Hub conference for WAHED, *Beyond Borders: Widening Access through International Co-operation*, was hosted by Aston University, Birmingham. Delegates and speakers came from the OECD, European Commission (EC), Lumina Foundation in the US, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), Peru, Ireland, the Philippines and the UK.

Australia: The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education held a very successful World Access to Higher Education Day (WAHED) conference on 28 November 2018. The event was opened by Professor John Cordery and Minister Tehan (via video) with 138 delegates attending from around Australia. Key speakers included Professor Glenn Withers, Professor Sally Kift, Associate Professor Maria Raciti and Professor Lesley Parker who spoke about the importance of equity in higher education and the important role of universities. Matt Brett and Nadine Zacharias also introduced the Student Equity 2030 Project and Discussion Paper. Delegates heard personal accounts from nine wonderful students telling their stories of how they had overcome barriers to succeed in higher education, through individual presentations and a student panel. The event concluded with a live connection to the launch of the WAHED UK event at Aston University, Birmingham where the WAHED Australian program was discussed and the work of the NCSEHE was outlined.

Research report – the first global survey of HE policy

New research launched for WAHED showed that the policy commitments to addressing HE inequalities across the world are weak in the majority of countries and the extent of the job that needs to be done. *'All around the world – Higher education equity policies across the globe'* is the largest global survey to date on looking at policy commitments to equitable access to HE covering over 60 countries across the world and was supported by the Lumina Foundation. It shows that only 11% of countries have a comprehensive national equity strategy which covers a range of equity groups.

"The countries that are most advanced in their policy commitment on behalf of providing equal opportunities of access and success in higher education have a comprehensive equity strategy—sometimes even a dedicated agency—, and they seek to ensure consistency over time in terms of alignment among policy objectives, improvement targets for various equity groups, resources, and quality assurance criteria."

(*'All around the world – Higher education equity policies across the globe'*, Jamil Salmi, November 2018)

Go to the WAHED website [here](#) to see the Equity Policy Map and the individual reports from the 69 countries featured in the study.

The WAHED Event Programme – changing policy and practice across the world

Global Events

In total, 40 WAHED events were held in 13 different countries on the day. WAHED activity was varied around the world, these events included: webinars, debates, seminars, board meetings, awards ceremonies, university taster sessions, roundtable discussions and conferences. This is further illustrated by the following country profiles from the USA, Pakistan, and Brazil.

United States of America

Accessibility and Inclusion on World Access to Higher Education Day led by GlobalMindED



What were the aims of the activity/event?

To raise awareness of accessibility and inclusion.

Audience

50 people joined in for the webinar.

What happened during this event?

This event featured an online webinar with experts around the world addressing accessibility and inclusion in regard to access to higher education. The Zoom webinar was live-streamed for an hour and the realities of access to higher education in regard to people with disabilities were discussed.

What were key messages coming out from the event?

Everyone on the panel shared personal stories about struggles regarding accessibility and inclusion in higher education, as well as in the workplace.

Pakistan

World Access To Higher Education 2018 - A week of activities by British Council Pakistan, led by British Council, Pakistan

What were the aims of the activity/event?

The week promoting WAHED specifically helped to develop tangible access goals to meet the Sustainable Development Goal of quality education and global prosperity.

Audience

During the week of activities around WAHED, the British Council touched 500 people in-person including Vice Chancellors, staff, faculty, students, policy-makers etc. It also trended at number 3 on Twitter.



What happened during this event?

- The British Council in Pakistan facilitated the Pakistani Higher Education Commission's vision by promoting collaborations and research linkages with the higher education sector in the UK.
- A range of talks & seminars on promoting access to higher education were facilitated including plenaries on quality assurance, transnational education, and leadership development, engaging UK delegates and senior faculty/vice-chancellors from relevant Pakistani universities.
- A TV talk show was recorded on the changing landscape of HE in Pakistan. A live radio programme was also broadcasted discussing the importance of increasing access to higher education and its role in producing employment opportunities for the youth of Pakistan.
- The UK delegation visited campuses and saw facilities of Pakistan's top 5 higher learning institutes.

What were key messages coming out from the event?

By facilitating the most senior and largest UK delegation in the history of the British Council in Pakistan, the Pak-UK Education Gateway has secured a pivotal role in improving access and quality in Higher Education in Pakistan, a core feature of the WAHED initiative.

Brazil

Pills on Diversity and Challenges for Academic Success on a Brazilian Campus, and Seminar on Access-Inclusion-Academic Success and 2030 Agenda led by *The University of Campinas*.



What were the aims of the activity/event?

The main objective of the event was to provide a discussion and develop transversal actions focusing on the Access-Inclusion-Success tripod. The seminar promoted during WAHED 2018 aimed to integrate initiatives and discuss necessary actions to receive a progressively diverse population, and measures to predict and prevent dropout, particularly in the first-second year.

Audience

Members of working groups dealing with themes of diversity, and members of various services including the 2019 Unicamp Access Work Group and the Student Assistance Service were invited. A total of 43 invited participants attended the meeting, including faculty members, staff and students.

What happened during this event?

After participants had an opportunity to introduce themselves, the Vice-Rector of Undergraduate studies presented a summary of the current phase of actions developed by the university to expand access, inclusion and student success. Then, there was an open discussion among the groups on challenges for inclusion and academic success with diversity, with each group bringing their own perspective and potential contribution.

What were key messages coming out from the event?

The main message focuses on the concept that diversity is quality and excellence, a motto for 2019. It will also be coupled with an effort to build new curricula taking into consideration collaborative learning experiences, using the Sustainable Millennium Objectives as an inspirational framework. Proposals for transversal actions that deal with diverse groups of students were also discussed, focusing on inclusion and consequent academic success.

Our Student Stories

The voices of students were key to WAHED. In the build-up to World Access to Higher Education Day, we carried out a global student voices campaign, highlighting how higher education can transform the lives of students from underrepresented groups.

If you can, please take the time to listen to student stories from the UK, Australia and Ireland each showing the various barriers overcome by underrepresented groups of students entering HE in different parts of the world, and the impact that that this has had on their lives. Despite having a perception that HE was not for them, these students all tell of the integral role that HE has played in changing their future prospects for the better.

Our collection of student voice stories and case studies can be viewed [here](#)

What now for WAHED?

The challenge now is to take the mission of WAHED forward. In 2019 we will be:

- Launching a new publication foregrounding key global issues in this area based on the UK Beyond Borders conference.
- Piloting a series of WAHED webinars looking at how inequalities in access are being addressed across the world.
- On the basis of the *'All around the world – Higher education equity policies across the globe'* report, pressing institutions and policymakers to commit to addressing HE inequalities in access and success. We will also be undertaking a Global Engagement Programme to take this work forward in 2019 in partnership with the Lumina Foundation.
- Building our network of supporters and partners to deliver the 2nd WAHED in November 2019.
- Developing a global agenda for change in equitable access to HE.

Working with WAHED

We are keen to hear from all organisations and individuals across the world who share the vision of WAHED and want to make a difference to inequality. To work with us please contact access@worldaccesshe.com