

TEFCE CONSULTATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES (IAU)

Skype meeting, Zagreb-Paris, 30 August 2019

Hilligje van't Land (Secretary General), Andreas Corcoran (Deputy Secretary General), IAU

Thomas Farnell (HE Policy Expert), Institute for the Development of Education / TEFCE project

MEETING CONCLUSIONS

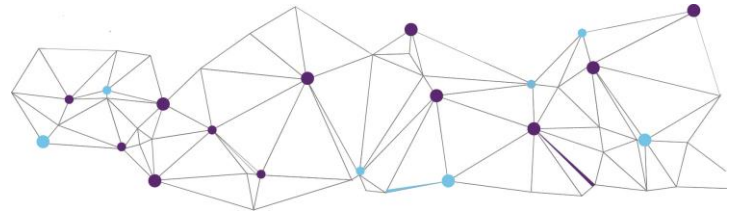
- **Presentation of findings of TEFCE project**
 - T. Farnell presented the initial findings of the TEFCE project, in the form of a summary of the findings of the mapping and critical synthesis of the current state-of-the-art in community engagement in higher education, as well as an overview of the principles and structure of TEFCE projects' proposed Toolbox for community-engaged universities.
- **Support for the TEFCE project approach:**
 - H. van't Land and A. Corcoran agreed that the societal impact of higher education is becoming an increasingly prominent area of debate in higher education, and the multidimensional approach adopted by the TEFCE project therefore appears highly appropriate.
 - On the question of measuring community engagement, IAU share the TEFCE concern that there cannot be an easy way to measure engagement and that quantification and key performance indicators lead to lot of paperwork and to limited usefulness for universities. The more qualitative approach proposed by TEFCE therefore seems more appropriate.
- **IAU and the societal impact of universities**
 - IAU focuses on societal impact of universities as one of its priorities, in particular within the framework of higher education contribution to sustainable development goals (SDGs)
 - IAU have already expressed their opposition to the university rankings based on their contribution to sustainable development goals, and feels that such approaches to measuring engagement and impact are not appropriate at all.
 - In another example of IAU's work of engagement, IAU organised their 2018 annual conference on Higher Education Partnerships for Societal Impact and published an issue of their annual newsletter with papers on the topic.
- **Overlaps between community engagement and the SDGs**
 - There are certainly areas of overlap between community engagement and the achieving SDGs, and making links where appropriate makes sense. The 2030 Agenda can also provide an opportunity to further advocate community engagement. However, community engagement in higher education (especially as defined in the TEFCE project) is broader

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concept with a longer history, and the discussion concluded that it is better to view community engagement and the SDGs in higher education as two parallel initiatives (with some overlaps) rather than confining community engagement within the SDG framework.

- **Opportunities for further cooperation between the TEFCE project and IAU**
 - Overall, the interests and approach of the TEFCE project and the IAU are well-aligned and the TEFCE project is invited to keep the leadership of IAU informed about the development of the Toolbox and other projects results.
 - IAU is not in the position to provide formal endorsements of international initiatives in which they have not been directly involved and which have not involved consultations with their member institutions. However, further opportunities for communicating the TEFCE results via IAU platforms (e.g. Twitter) and participation of TEFCE representatives at the IAU conference in Dublin in 2020.

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