

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION AND UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

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UNIVERSITY QUALITY

UNESCO and EHEA

Quality criteria must reflect the overall objectives of higher education (UNESCO, 2009).

Objectives focused on giving citizens competences *to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space* (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, 1999).

University Rankings

“Quality measure” instruments.

Verdict on the quality, excellence or distinction of institutions or educational programmes.

POINTS OF FURTHER IMPORTANCE

- I) The prioritizing of certain aspects disregards any accordance to the set of Higher Education objectives outlined by EHEA.
 - II) The idea of “quality” used in rankings does not correspond to a democratic criteria, but nonetheless it strongly affects Higher Education as a public good.
 - III) Demonstrating their own value itself becomes a primary objective over other elements for universities.
 - IV) Rankings are a powerful conduit not only for the public display of recognition, but also for determining which efforts are to be made in its pursuit.
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What if university rankings could foster the commitment of universities to better their outcomes as regards social dimension?

| University ranking |
|---|
| • <i>QS World University Rankings®</i> |
| • <i>Academic Ranking of World Universities – ARWU-</i> |
| • <i>Ranking Web of Universities (Webometrics)</i> |
| • <i>Times Higher Education World University Rankings</i> <i>(THE World University Rankings)</i> |
| • <i>U-Multirank</i> |

What if university rankings could foster the commitment of universities to better their outcomes as regards social dimension?

Working towards the inclusion in university rankings of Social Dimension

- “Call to Action” (Talloires Network, 2014).
 - QS Stars ratings.
 - UI GreenMetric (Universitas Indonesia).
 - Etc.
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PROPOSAL

Part 1. Set of indicators

| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Annual contribution of the number of university graduates from recognized institutions to society</i>• <i>Upward intergenerational mobility in education (by parents' educational attainment).</i>• <i>Gender equity in completion of higher education</i>• <i>Gender equity in composition of highest level academic staff.</i> | Equity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Consideration of work on social engagement.</i>• <i>Leadership in actions focused on sustainable development and social engagement.</i>• <i>Leadership in social development projects.</i> | Institutional engagement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Learning outcomes in 'Equity'</i>• <i>Learning outcomes in 'Sustainability'</i>• <i>Learning outcomes in 'Democratic Citizenship'</i>• <i>Learning outcomes in 'Human Rights'</i>• <i>Learning outcomes in 'Cooperation and Social Engagement'.</i> | Substantive learning outcomes in accredited degrees |

PROPOSAL

Part 2. Lines of a future strategy.

- 1) Pilot study :
 - calculation of indicator results.
 - confronting the lack of data.
 - 2) Submitting a set of indicators and results to discussion by different stakeholders involved.
 - 3) Integrating accepted indicators into the university rankings.
 - 4) Certifying pertinence and quality of rankings in line with the Higher Education objectives, including Social Dimension aims.
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CONCLUSION

There is a noticeable lack of attention to the social dimension in international rankings, although the inclusion of indicators focused on this dimension is not only **important** but also **feasible** and **affordable**.

The immediate challenge may lie in **endowing rankings with a *substantiveness* that favours social development in its diverse facets.**

Thank you very much

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