Introduction

The United Nations University (UNU) was established by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly as “an international community of scholars, engaged in research, postgraduate training and dissemination of knowledge”.

Given that our Charter mandate is to conduct “research into the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare”, it is not coincidental that our programme aligns closely with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and generally encompasses the full range of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our more than 600 highly skilled researchers and support personnel, working in more than a dozen institutes and programmes on five continents, are developing evidence-based solutions and advocating realistic policies that will enable the UN system and UN Member States to reach the targets encapsulated in the SDGs. And because our research programme is problem-focused rather than discipline-based, we are able to contribute particularly at the intersections of multiple SDGs.

UNU is, first and foremost, a network for problem-focused research on issues of peace and governance; global development and inclusion; and environment, climate, and energy. Our position within the UN system gives us a unique entry point to global debates, while the academic freedom guaranteed by the UNU Charter enables us to provide decision-makers with relevant, impartial, and accessible information. The overarching goal is to contribute to shaping sustainable development policies that will enable all individuals to live their lives in safety, freedom, decency, and good health – without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same.

UNU’s research findings are disseminated primarily through academic and policy publications (most of which are freely available online) and public events. In addition to promoting interaction amongst scientific and policy communities worldwide and with members of the general public building on emerging public policy issues, we also offer specialised training opportunities – including accredited postgraduate degree programmes – that help to equip tomorrow’s leaders with the academic foundations they will need to solve emerging global challenges.

This 2018 Annual Report presents a broad overview of the thematic and geographic scope of our work rather than an exhaustive inventory of our operations and achievements. For more information about the work of UNU, please consult our website (unu.edu).

To receive monthly updates (commentary, research, and news) from across the global UNU system, subscribe to our INSIGHTS newsletter (unu.edu/insights).
Rector’s Welcome

The year 2018 marked the 45th anniversary of the adoption of the UNU Charter by the United Nations General Assembly (on 6 December 1973) as well as the start of UNU’s 44th year of operation (in September).

Over the course of four decades, UNU has shifted the focus of its work several times – a natural evolution for any think tank guided by the ambition to be relevant and impactful. This agility has ensured that UNU could quickly identify and respond to new opportunities and extend the scope and reach of its research for the benefit of policymakers, developing countries, and the UN system.

A particular focus of the UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019 has been re-aligning the work programme to better respond to the policy needs of the United Nations and its Member States. We took a first step in this direction in 2014 by establishing the UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) at UNU Headquarters in Tokyo. In 2018, building on the initial successes of UNU-CPR, we took the further step of merging UNU-CPR with our Office at the United Nations and relocating UNU-CPR staff to New York. This has significantly expanded our access to, and participation in, important UN policy processes and has enhanced our engagement with important target audiences and donors.

Through this and other ongoing initiatives, UNU has been successful in reaching new audiences and achieving policy impact. We are increasingly being sought out – including at the highest levels of the UN’s planning and policymaking offices – to partner as a “neutral knowledge broker” that can provide an objective, impartial evidence base to support innovative policy options.

UNU also has seen a significant renewal of leadership and has reached gender parity in the University’s academic leadership for the first time in 40-plus years, a major milestone for the University. In 2018, UNU welcomed five new institute directors and a new Vice-Rector in Europe. Personnel changes across senior positions have contributed to achieving the ambitious gender equality objectives set by the University’s governing Council; as of December 2018, female staff at UNU constituted 47 per cent of the professional and higher categories (P-3 to D-2). UNU has more than tripled the percentage of female staff members at those levels since the end of 2012.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the former directors and vice-rector for their hard work and dedication, and to publicly welcome our new colleagues to the UNU family.

I also wish to thank warmly the outgoing Chair of the UNU Council, Dr Radha Kumar, for her contributions in this role since 2016, and her continuing support as a Council member henceforth. I also extend my gratitude to the other Council members whose terms end in 2019 for their valuable contributions and support over the past three years. I congratulate Ms Angela Kane on being elected as the next UNU Council Chair (from May 2019). The UNU Council plays a critical role in orienting the University, and its very distinguished members devote considerable, unremunerated time to the task.

Finally, I want to thank you – the readers of this report – for your interest in our work. Achieving sustainable development requires understanding and addressing myriad complex, inter-related, and multifaceted scientific and policy problems (rather than tackling specific, limited sets of issues as national policymakers are often inclined to do). Our research, as you will find outlined in the pages of this document, considers the interlinkages and synergies between the Sustainable Development Goals and their processes and targets.

I hope that you will find this 2018 UNU Annual Report to be informative, and that it will help you to understand UNU’s efforts to fulfil its role as a think tank for the UN system.

David M. Malone
Rector of the United Nations University
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Features

At UNU, we take an interdisciplinary, cross-cutting approach to research on pressing global problems. We generate knowledge to support an evidence-based rethinking of policies and approaches by providing decision-makers with fresh perspectives on the most urgent policy issues, proactive analyses of emerging concerns, and sound policy alternatives.

To better highlight our people, approach, and products, the following feature articles offer examples of our work on three selected topics: gender digital equality, wastewater management, and inclusive economic development.
With the dawn of a fourth industrial revolution, the world is on the verge of technological fusion that will hyper-connect humans, environments, and the products of digital innovation. This momentum is already being harnessed for data-driven progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, but it will also undermine SDG success if women and girls cannot equally and meaningfully participate in the digital sphere.

The core tenet of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is “leave no one behind”, an objective that requires gender equality. Persistent barriers, however, are marginalising women and girls and widening what UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called “a deep gender gap in access to digital technologies”.

The UNU Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS) is targeting this digital divide with research examining the extent and dynamics of gender-based digital inequalities through its work with EQUALS: The Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age. EQUALS is an initiative co-founded by UNU, three UN agencies (the International Telecommunication Union, UN Women, and the International Trade Centre), and the mobile communications trade body GSMA.

UNU-CS leads the EQUALS Research Group comprising more than 30 researchers from education and research institutions, civil society, and technology-relevant organisations around the world. Their research is building comprehensive evidence that tells the story of uneven experiences of women and girls compared to men and boys in contexts ranging from jobs, wages, security, and privacy, to cyber threats and new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).
Assessing the state of gender digital equality

Secretary-General Guterres framed his 2018 address to the General Assembly around two “epochal challenges” – one being the risks associated with advances in technology, including their potential “to discriminate against women and reinforce our male-dominated culture”. But countering the trends that lead to digital discrimination first requires a foundation of knowledge on the current socio-economic and cultural barriers to gender digital equality.

Up until now, collection of official statistics in this regard has been hindered by varying research capacities of national statistics offices and a deficit of agreed-on definitions and methodologies for data collection. As a result, there is limited geographical coverage for most information and communications technology (ICT) indicators, and a severe lack of sex-disaggregated data, especially for developing countries.

In 2018, the EQUALS Research Group completed an initial research phase aimed at producing a global outlook on the state of gender digital equality. With case study contributions from EQUALS experts and UNU-led curation of data from numerous sources, the report – “Taking Stock: Data and Evidence on Gender Equality in Digital Access, Skills, and Leadership” – examines gender equality in three core action areas: access to ICTs, basic and advanced digital skills, and meaningful participation and leadership in the technology industry.

From digital access to digital skills

Despite apparent improvements in digital access in developing countries, EQUALS research is revealing that the impact on gender digital gaps is not consistent. Instead, the analysis shows that “a gender digital divide persists irrespective of a country’s overall ICT access levels, economic performance, income levels, or geographic location”.

Basic digital access and literacy are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for women to meaningfully use ICTs to advance their social and economic mobility. And as technologies become more sophisticated and expensive and enable more transformational use, gender digital divides often widen in favour of men.

One area where this trend will have profound consequences is the global jobs market. Technologies such as AI will reconfigure employment, supplanting many of the office and administrative jobs which are performed by a larger share of women in many countries. This means that efforts to build an inclusive digital society should not only improve women’s digital access, but must also equip them with adaptable digital skills for jobs of the future in fields such as computing and engineering.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education can establish the foundation for these advanced digital skills. EQUALS is finding, however, that in many parts of the world, girls perceive their own skill levels to be lower than boys and that they have less interest in STEM subjects, resulting in only a third of women pursuing these fields in higher education.

Importantly, the research is spotlighting potential ways to help overcome social and psychological barriers that prevent young women and girls from aspiring to ICT-related careers. Computer coding schools, technology boot camps, makerspaces, and massive

“We know there is a gender digital divide, but we need data and evidence that demonstrate its extent and implications. This first report by the EQUALS Research Group fulfils that need by providing comprehensive insights on gender digital inequality, highlighting the implications of persistent gaps and the reduced, unequal and even dangerous digital experiences of women and girls compared to men and boys.”

António Guterres  
UN Secretary-General
There is no one solution to closing gender digital divides. Gender digital inequality stems from multiple intersecting economic, social, and cultural barriers. Remedies must be grounded in evidence and knowledge about which barriers are at play and what would work best in different contexts.

Araba Sey
UNU-CS Principal Research Fellow
Fresh water, which balances ecosystems, drives industry, feeds agriculture, and sustains human health, accounts for only 3% of Earth’s water. Today, 3.6 billion people are already affected by water scarcity, and global demand is expected to grow by 40% by 2050. And as water consumption increases, so too will wastewater – 80% of which is currently released untreated into the environment.

Spotlighting this plight at the launch of the Water Action Decade in March, UN Secretary-General António Guterres implored that “we cannot continue to take water for granted and expect to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Solutions exist and new technologies are in the pipeline to improve how we manage water…but often these solutions are inaccessible for those who need them most…”

To ensure that solutions to this complex problem are accessible, the United Nations University Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-FLORES) collaborated with partners in Germany and Latin America on the project Resource Recovery from Wastewater in the Americas – Assessing the Water-Soil-Waste Nexus (otherwise known as SludgeTec).

This partnership between Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, Fideicomiso de Infraestructura Ambiental de Los Valles de Hidalgo, Mexico, and Technische Universität Dresden, brought together international experts and local stakeholders to co-design sustainable wastewater treatment and management systems for communities in Guatemala and Mexico.
Challenges for an urbanising region

Filling an 80,000–year–old caldera in the Guatemalan Highlands, Lake Atitlan is renowned as one of the world’s most beautiful freshwater lakes. It is also Central America’s deepest lake and the primary source of water for over 70,000 people living in Panajachel — one of 15 Lake Atitlan municipalities.

Panajachel’s population is 95% indigenous, and 70% live in poverty exacerbated by resource management challenges such as wastewater disposal, deforestation, erosion, and demographic pressure. Discharges of raw and partially treated wastewater from lake communities have had a number of human health impacts, including waterborne disease and skin infections.

Further north, in Mexico, the Requena dam near Tepeji provides drinking water for 87,000 people, almost half of whom live in poverty. This region is also troubled by resource management challenges, in particular water scarcity.

For more than 100 years, Tepeji farmers have alleviated agricultural water shortages by using wastewater for irrigation. While their resourcefulness has helped mitigate water scarcity and improve their crop yields, the use of insufficiently treated wastewater has had a number of negative environmental, sanitary, and social impacts such as cholera outbreaks and accumulation of heavy metals in the soil.

The challenges that these two municipalities face at the intersections of water, soil, and waste are not unique. Throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, 50% of the population lives in small- and medium-sized cities where similar wastewater problems impact their well-being and prosperity. And due to the region’s rapid urbanisation, this percentage continues to grow.

Research with and for communities

Latin American and Caribbean countries urgently need to invest in sustainable, locally-appropriate options for wastewater treatment if they intend to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. But as with many global SDG efforts over the past four years, early progress on water challenges has been hindered by a lack of baseline data and shared knowledge.

As part of its “Foundations for Action”, the 2018 UN High Level Panel on Water stressed that for effective water management, “stakeholders need to understand the quantity, quality, distribution, use, and risks of the water they have, and therefore need to invest in water-related data as well as the systems to share, analyse, and take decisions with this data”.

Acknowledging this need from the outset, the SludgeTec team used participatory methods to engage researchers, practitioners, municipal decision-makers, and local communities in hands-on knowledge-sharing activities. This gave participants the opportunity to contribute, regardless of their cultural and professional backgrounds or their language abilities. This was particularly essential to give equal voice to the communities’ indigenous populations.

“Sustainable solutions depend on participatory processes that provide capacity development opportunities for stakeholders and local communities and involve them in all project phases from assessment to implementation.”

Angela Hahn
UNU-FLORES Research Associate

“…”
A mix of roundtable discussions and transregional workshops facilitated vital exchange among stakeholders in Guatemala and Mexico, enabling communities to learn from each other’s unique wastewater challenges and build a common pool of knowledge.

Wastewater management has a direct impact on the availability and quality of resources such as water and soil. To find solutions that consider these interdependencies, SludgeTec researchers employed a “Nexus Approach” that focuses on understanding resource flows across different scales and between different points in a cycle. Using this methodology reveals potential benefits and implications for other sectors and resources, and related SDGs such as health (SDG 3) and food production (SDG 2).

Instead of just looking at the individual resources, the Nexus Approach considers the functioning, productivity, and management of the economic and social dimensions of a complex system.

“Sustainable solutions for wastewater management include resource recovery such as the use of treated wastewater for irrigation, or stabilised sludge as soil amendment.”

Serena Caucci
UNU-FLORES Senior Research Associate

A framework for sustainable solutions

Fifteen months of collaboration with communities guided the SludgeTec team to develop and apply a transdisciplinary framework of methods. The resulting recommendations may allow local stakeholders to take ownership of their solution process and fix the technical issues of the treatment plant. This could lead to innovative solutions for overcoming unsustainable wastewater situations by establishing, for example, a citizen observatory for community-based monitoring systems, and regular and open neighbourhood discussion forums, as was recommended by stakeholders in Mexico.

“We have been working with UNU-FLORES on this project since 2016 to improve sanitary conditions, waste disposal and wastewater treatment technologies, and the sustainability of managing pollutants around Lake Atitlan. SludgeTec alone will not solve the lake’s problems, but it is an integral part of improving the health conditions of about 300,000 people in villages around the lake and essential for conserving our beautiful Lake Atitlan,” said Jorge Ivan Cifuentes of the Department of Engineering and Nanotechnology of Materials at the University of San Carlos of Guatemala.

From enhancing environmental performance of treatment plants, and ways to improve data collection, to strengthening partnerships and improving governance strategies, the SludgeTec framework can be used to guide municipal governments towards targeted system sustainability.

Improvements can be as simple as stopping solid waste burial on the premises of the treatment plant or establishing a Facebook page to inform the community about issues related to water and wastewater. Other initiatives are more complex, for example, planning health and safety measures for facility workers or establishing regular meetings for exchange and decision-making between key stakeholders and those who have been less likely to be included, such as indigenous community organisations.

In many ways, the crux of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is their interdependence. As environmental resources such as water, soil, and waste become increasingly threatened by the impacts of climate change, demographic shifts, and socio-economic pressure, we must look beyond outdated resource management approaches that ignore this interdependence.

UNU is doing its part through pioneering research like the SludgeTec project. By leveraging innovative methods such as the Nexus Approach, UNU is addressing the needs of developing and emerging economies in the management of environmental resources, and ensuring that vulnerable regions around the world are better equipped with the knowledge and abilities to achieve sustainable development.

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As the largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa’s successes and failures spill over into the broader region. Today, as South Africans face high unemployment and a sluggish economy, policymakers are wrestling to create success through solutions that will quell rising public debt, overcome persistent inequality, and stimulate regional economic integration.

But a deficit of data that can inform whole-system answers threatens to impede policies that lead to inclusive growth – an economic pillar of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.

In 2018, the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) initiated targeted research to fill this data gap through the project Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development (SA-TIED).

A collaboration between the South African government, the International Food Policy Research Institute, and UNU-WIDER, the project was launched to investigate paths toward more inclusive growth and to guide policy innovations to tackle some of the most pressing and ongoing challenges in South Africa.

By bringing together staff from South African ministries and Southern African and international research institutes, the goal is to develop capacities for data management and research on all sides of the policymaking and research interface.
A shared investment in policy research

SA-TIED was conceived with the intention of syncing research advancement with the contemporary needs of local policymakers. To that end, the research agenda has been co-created with officials in the South African Economic Sectors, Employment, and Infrastructure Development Cluster, whose work is central to overcoming some of the core challenges in the South African economy.

To date, more than two-thirds of SA-TIED research papers have included Southern African authors, many of them from the South African Department of Trade and Industry, the National Treasury, and the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

Catherine Macleod, of the National Treasury, points to this shared investment as “one of the keys to success” of the project: “We’ve had SARS, the National Treasury, and other interested government departments really involved in setting up the architecture of how this project would work.”

As UNU-WIDER’s biggest collaboration to date, the project will result in more than 150 research papers on a range of policy-relevant topics. It will improve and develop datasets and economic models upon which to build future research. And it will finance PhD studies for technical government staff and contribute to expansion of the skills and abilities of economic policymakers in the region.

But the overall goal is to get the latest research into the hands of the policymakers who need it.

Bringing new insights to economic development

Much of this work is about building an economy of inclusion that creates jobs for a broader swath of the population, and a tax system that can meet the revenue needs of the state while also addressing persistent inequalities.

For example, SA-TIED research is analysing the factors that contribute to growth of firms and employment creation, and is looking at public revenue and the efficiency of South Africa’s tax and social transfer system.

According to Duncan Pieterse, Acting Deputy Director General of South Africa’s National Treasury, “ultimately it’s about the policies, and how they impact the lives of ordinary South Africans in a way that can meaningfully contribute to growth in the future. If you don’t have good data, you can’t answer any of these questions”.

Much of the project relies on researchers having access to wide-ranging and granular data on firms and households that, until recently, have been inaccessible and kept under protection of confidentiality. But as a result of the collaboration between UNU-WIDER, SARS, and the National Treasury, South Africa has joined a handful of countries globally (and is the only African country) that have secured and anonymised their tax data for researchers to use.

This is opening doors to a vault of historical knowledge that Pieterse says will allow the project “to evaluate government policy, to look back in time and understand what has been the impact of government
policy”, and “to ask ‘how can one redesign those programmes going forward to make better use of these resources?’”. This will pave the way for policy innovation, more accurate answers to tough policy questions, and focused solutions.

**Policy for prosperity**

Twenty-five of the 150 papers planned have been published, and already the research is having an impact in South Africa. Two SA-TIED papers made headlines in December after being the subject of a Financial Mail weekly exclusive. Around seven billion rand (about US$500 million) in public finances is lost to tax havens every year in South Africa, and these papers were some of the first to use the newly available data to examine the impact that international tax havens have on the revenue collection of developing countries.

Researchers believe that by upgrading the data analysis capacity of the tax authority and focusing on the largest firms, South Africa can rein in most of the one billion rand (about US$70 million) lost through the mispricing of imports. This is revenue that can help balance South Africa’s budget and sustain government spending.

As South Africa looks to get on a sustainable track towards a more robust and inclusive economy, SA-TIED is also looking for ways to increase South Africa’s role in regional trade and economic integration. John Page, UNU-WIDER Senior Research Fellow for SA-TIED’s work on regional development, explains that, “to the extent that we can help to design policies that allow South Africa to get greater prosperity spread throughout the region, that benefits everybody”.

It is this outlook that makes the SA-TIED partnership a driving force for the SDGs in sub-Saharan Africa. As UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed highlighted in Johannesburg in December, “Africa can lead the world in implementing the SDGs... Achieving the Goals by 2030 is a big task, but it is also an opportunity for ground-breaking and innovative partnerships that leverage the resources and talents of everyone, everywhere”.

Through its unique research partnerships, Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development is building a data foundation for economic innovation that can overcome domestic barriers and help achieve sustainable development throughout Southern Africa.

“Not all households have family members that can work, which makes building social safety nets vital. But to finance social programmes, tax revenue becomes important. This is why I am building tax-benefit microsimulation models, which are tailor-made tools to examine the impacts of expanding social protection in developing countries.”

Jukka Pirttilä
UNU-WIDER Non-resident Senior Research Fellow
Our Work on the Global Goals

The aim of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to align global action to overcome the world’s challenges, from hunger and poverty to equality and peace. Governments, businesses, civil society, and the United Nations system are working together to achieve the SDGs by 2030, thereby improving the lives of people everywhere.

In 2018, UNU researchers were engaged in more than 180 research and capacity development projects worldwide, generating knowledge and building expertise to monitor progress and generate solutions that will support the realisation of the SDG objectives. The following sections highlight how the 2018 work and activities of UNU were aligned with, and contributed to, all 17 goals.

#SDGExplorer
unu.edu/explore
GOALS 1 & 2
No Poverty, Zero Hunger

There are many intersections between the 17 SDGs, such as the linkage between Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 2 (Zero Hunger). Enhanced food security reinforces individual efforts to overcome poverty, while reducing poverty eases chronic hunger and malnutrition. According to recent global statistics, some 780 million people live below the “extreme poverty” threshold, and more than 800 million are undernourished. UNU research brings new perspectives to the challenges of ending poverty and hunger. This research focuses on understanding the relevant socio-economic drivers of poverty and hunger, improving access by the impoverished to basic resources and services, and supporting communities and regions affected by conflict and natural disasters.

PROJECT
“Jobless growth” in Africa
A five-year initiative by UNU-WIDER on jobs, poverty, and structural change in Africa sought to better understand why many Africans are “working hard but working poor”. Outcomes of this initiative are outlined in multiple working papers and a set of open access books, including the 2018 volume Industries without Smokestacks: Industrialization in Africa Reconsidered. UNU-WIDER is developing a massive open online course (MOOC) based on this initiative. Jobs, Poverty, and Structural Change in Africa

PROJECT
Fish handling in African communities
Fulfilling a pledge made at the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, UNU-FTP is working on a project to improve livelihoods and food security/safety in African coastal communities. Activities in 2018 included the introduction of improved fish handling techniques in beneficiary countries. Poverty Elimination African Coastal Communities

POLICY BRIEF
Food security
UNU-INRA published a policy brief that focuses on the cultural significance of food from neglected and underutilised crop species (plants whose use is localised) in the Oromia region of Ethiopia. The study discusses policy options and makes recommendations to increase the value of such crops in the region and to promote their use to improve food security. Promoting Neglected and Underutilized Plant Species for improved Food Security

PROJECT
Sustainable fisheries
UNU-FTP is engaged in a project that promotes sustainable fishing harvests and “blue growth” in small-island developing states. SIDS Countries Blue Economy

EXPERT
“Although there is enough food to feed the world, over 800 million people go hungry each day. My research examines the roles of humanitarian, social, and agricultural programmes and innovations in alleviating hunger and improving the nutrition of vulnerable populations.”

Nyasha Tirivayi
UNU-MERIT Researcher
“Constructed wetlands are an example of an untapped, low–technology, cost–effective, nature–based solution for pollution control, securing water supply, and improving agricultural resource management. They are engineered systems using the natural functions of soil, plants, and microorganisms to retain water and improve water quality.”

Excerpt from “Does Nature Have the Solutions to Our Water Problems”, published in the SDG Knowledge Hub. Authors: Tamara Avellán and Kurt Brüggemann, UNU–FLORES

**PROJECT**

**Drought risk reduction**

UNU-EHS contributed to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction by conducting an indicator–based risk assessment on agricultural droughts in South Africa and Ukraine. The assessment technique, which used remote sensing and statistical data, can be applied in other data–scarce regions to monitor the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction measures, thereby moving from reactive to proactive disaster risk management and reducing the impacts of drought on society, the environment, and the economy. *EvIENz – Earth Observation–based Information Products for Drought Risk Reduction on the National Level*

**PROJECT**

**Inclusive growth in Mozambique**

UNU-WIDER implemented a collaborative project to support inclusive growth in Mozambique and improve living standards. Activities included major data collection, policy advice formulation, and capacity building initiatives. Notably, policy briefs were issued on “The Business Environment of Mozambican Manufacturing Firms” and “Workforce and Leadership Characteristics in Mozambican Manufacturing”. *Inclusive Growth in Mozambique – Scaling-up Research and Capacity*
GOAL 3

Good Health & Well-being

People today generally live longer and healthier lives than their ancestors, but many still suffer needlessly from lifestyle-based ill health, preventable disease, and premature death. Achieving Goal 3 will require a sustained effort, with a special focus on population groups and regions that have the highest burden of disease. UNU conducts policy-relevant analyses that can inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of health programmes. Our focus is on health governance to stem the rise of non-communicable diseases, respond to the emergence of global pathogens, diminish the human health toll of natural disasters, and ensure the key elements of healthy development.

EXPERT

“More than ever before, the cities we live in directly determine our health, well-being, and prosperity. My work at UNU focuses on understanding and addressing urban complexity to improve health, increase equity, and design, build, and manage healthier, more sustainable cities.”

Jose Siri
UNU-IIGH Research Fellow

PROJECT

Ensuring healthy lives
A UNU-IAS report showcased sustainability initiatives in multiple areas of health, including hygiene, sanitation, and nutrition. The report highlighted the value of collective health promotion action at the local level in addressing modern health challenges around the world, including the need for a participatory approach and multi-stakeholder networking. Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for All: Experiences of Community Health, Hygiene, Sanitation and Nutrition

PROJECT

Improved sanitation and health
UNU-MERIT continued its work in Kenya to evaluate the implementation of a project based on the premise that financial inclusion improves sanitation and health. The project seeks to sustainably expand demand for and access to improved rural sanitation technologies through microfinancing. FINISH-INK: Financial Inclusion Improves Sanitation and Health IN Kenya

TRAINING

Implementation research
UNU-IIGH collaborated with two partners to develop a four-day blended-learning course that focused on how implementation research can be used to improve disease control and public health strategies. This course, with participants largely from the Malaysian Ministry of Health and World Health Organization Regional Training Centres, explored the challenges of implementing large-scale projects in communities. Implementation Research Workshop

PROJECT

HIV and the security sector
A UNU-IIGH project sought to identify the issues and trends underlying the transmission and prevalence of HIV in African prisons, and to disaggregate these issues according to gender and other factors. The work also included assessing the implications of relevant international human rights treaties in addressing HIV across African prisons and penitentiaries. Governance for Health in Developing Countries
PROJECT
Revitalising slum areas
UNU-IIGH is a partner in a project that is using a water-sensitive approach to redevelop slum areas in Indonesia and Fiji. The aim is to integrate green infrastructure to enhance health, safety, and access to water and sanitation, and to reduce vulnerability. The Institute is supporting the effort through assessment, oversight, and policy engagement to ensure the dissemination and translation of findings as they relate to gender, health, and well-being. Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments

PARTNERSHIP
Digital health
UNU-IIGH joined in the launch of a partnership aimed at supporting UN Member States and the World Health Organization with the necessary knowledge products to develop sustainable digital health strategies. The UNU-IIGH Director serves as a co-chair of the partnership task force, and efforts are underway to coordinate stakeholders in digital health and feed into the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. Global Health 2030 Innovation Task Force

ARTICLE
“If we keep treating each infectious disease outbreak as something to just throw vaccines at until they go away, we are doomed to fail. We should harness the motivation and political will spurred by these outbreaks to institute long-term, sustainable, and holistic approaches to disease prevention.”

Excerpt from “Vaccines Are Not a Cure-all for Infectious Diseases, but This Could Be”, published in Our World. Author: Pascale Allotey, UNU-IIGH Director
Quality Education, Decent Work

More than 1 in 10 youth worldwide are neither in the educational system nor working, while over half of all children in primary and lower secondary schools are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. Without a proper education, individuals cannot acquire the practical and critical thinking skills needed to attain a fulfilling livelihood. In support of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), which are both vital cornerstones of sustainable development, UNU strives both to help (university) students from the Global South to access educational opportunities that will enable them to thrive internationally as well as to stem the “brain drain” that can adversely impact the quality of education available in developing countries.
**BOOK**

**Alternative industrialisation**

In an open-access book, UNU-WIDER challenged the view that Africa’s potential to achieve sustained, rapid growth (and, in turn, rising incomes) is dependent on expanded manufacturing. The book argues that other activities sharing the characteristics of manufacturing—including tourism, ICT and other services, food processing, and horticulture—can play a key role in offering new opportunities for economic growth in Africa. *Industries without Smokestacks: Industrialization in Africa Reconsidered*

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**EVENT**

**Development economics**

In September, a three-day development conference in Helsinki showcased UNU-WIDER, its efforts to support inclusive social and economic development, and the many people and institutions that have contributed to that work. The conference focused on the main themes and findings of UNU-WIDER’s research from 2009 to 2018: finance, food, and climate change; and transformation, inclusion, and sustainability. The event also introduced new initiatives by UNU-WIDER to mobilise its future research around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *Think Development – Think WIDER*

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**ARTICLE**

“We are on the verge of significant scientific breakthroughs in understanding what is likely to make someone vulnerable to modern slavery—and in tailoring programming and policies accordingly. There are still debates to be had over the methodologies and techniques needed to achieve these breakthroughs. But these discussions must be encouraged as they will ultimately build strong common methodologies, cultivate trust in data-sharing, and support the uptake of digital tools for unlocking evidence on modern slavery risk.”

Except from “Building the Evidence Base to Accelerate the Fight Against Modern Slavery”, published in Thompson Reuters Foundation News; Author: James Cockayne, UNU-CPR Director
Gender inequality continues to deprive women of many basic human rights and opportunities. Addressing SDG 5 requires countering pervasive gender-based discrimination and modifying social norms and attitudes that demean women and girls. There is urgent need for legal frameworks that ensure equality between women and men. At UNU, a commitment to gender equality permeates everything we do. Our core gender research focuses on generating knowledge to support development policies that eliminate barriers for women and girls in health, education, employment, and access to resources. Our work gives voice to the unique experiences of women and girls, highlighting their rights and empowering them to be leaders in education, science, and technology.

**EVENT**

**Child marriage**
At the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March, UNU–GEST co-organised and moderated a side event that shed light on the impact of child marriage for girls in rural areas of Malawi and Zambia, and how the issue is being successfully tackled. *The Road to End Child Marriage in Africa*

**BOOK**

**Gender equity in development**
In an open-access book published by Oxford University Press, UNU-WIDER addressed the widespread mistreatment and overt discrimination in households and labour markets that often undermine the autonomy of women in the developing world. The book, based on the findings of the multidisciplinary UNU-WIDER Gender and Development project, explores key sources of female empowerment and discusses current challenges and opportunities for the future. *Towards Gender Equity in Development*

**BOOK**

**Gendered labour patterns**
The book *Gender, Work and Migration* is based on UNU-GCM’s research on migrants employed in sectors of the economy that are typically regarded as marginal or precarious, such as domestic and healthcare work, cleaning work in hospitals, and work in call centres. The book seeks to advance our understanding of the aspirations and mobilities of migrants and their families in relation to questions of gender and labour opportunities. *Gender, Work and Migration: Agency in Gendered Labour Settings*

**EXPERT**

“Gender equality is a human right, especially as developing countries aspire to inclusive growth. I want to contribute to evidence-based policymaking in achieving this goal. My research at UNU examines the causes and consequences of female autonomy within households, in labour markets, and in broader society.”

Smriti Sharma
UNU-WIDER Research Fellow
PROJECT
Gender equality in ICT
The global EQUALS partnership promotes gender equality in information and communication technologies (ICT) access, skills, and leadership by “bringing women to tech, and tech to women”. As a member of the EQUALS partnership, UNU–CS heads a research group of more than 30 leading research and academic institutions generating evidence-based solutions and policies in support of gender digital equality. Initial findings suggest that while “developments in digital technologies open new pathways to gender diversity and inclusion … lack of attention to gender dynamics hampers the potential for true progress”. EQUALS Research: Advancing Research for Gender Equality in the Digital Age

TRAINING
Gender and sustainable society
The theme of the annual UNU-IAS Global Seminar in Kanagawa prefecture (Japan) was “What Can We Do to Realize a Sustainable Society?: A Gender & Sexuality Perspective”. This four-day seminar covered such global issues as armed and political conflicts, economic disparities, and inequalities in the labour market and at universities. UNU Global Seminar – Shonan Session

TRAINING
Gender budgeting training
UNU–GEST offered a short course that focused on how budgets can be turned into tools for transformation that move society towards gender equality, promote development and women’s rights, and reduce inequality within and among countries. Short Course on Gender-responsive Budgeting

TRAINING
Gender and energy
UNU-GTP and UNU-GEST co-hosted a three-day short course that provided an overview of the energy access situation in developing countries and its impacts on women, as well as the perspective of African women in the geothermal sector. Short Course on Gender and Energy

HIGHLIGHT
Gender Mainstreaming at UNU
UNU strives to create a gender-sensitive work environment and to mainstream gender in its research. In 2018, the University continued to make progress in implementing its Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016–2019, achieving nearly two-thirds (16 of 25) of the plan’s goals. As of year-end, 52% of UNU personnel overall were women, including 47% of senior staff (P-3 level and above). Nearly 60% of students enrolled in UNU’s postgraduate degree programmes, and 52% of individuals participating in the University’s non-degree training opportunities, were women. Among UNU research projects, 81% of ongoing projects (and 93% of new projects launched in 2018) across the global UNU system consider gender in some aspect of their design and implementation.
GOAL 6
Clean Water & Sanitation

Clean water is a basic human need — yet more than a quarter of the world’s population lacks access to safe drinking water, and twice as many must cope without safely managed sanitation services. Furthermore, less than half of domestic wastewater is safely treated before re-entering the environment. Progress on achieving SDG 6 is essential for reaching many of the other SDG targets. UNU research helps decision-makers utilise existing and emerging data to support effective water-related policymaking and planning. Our research (which covers water, sanitation, hygiene, and wastewater management and reuse) bridges science, policy, and practice to pair innovative solutions with the needs of communities.

REPORT
Canada’s role on the global water stage
A report by UNU-INWEH offers a critical examination of the capabilities of Canada’s water sector and ways in which the nation could play a more prominent role to meet, and help others meet, water-related SDG targets. The report examines several dimensions of Canada’s contributions and capacities, including water education and research, internal and external water project investments, and water technology and governance experiences. *Canada in the Global Water World: Analysis of Capabilities*

BOOK
Wastewater for agricultural use
UNU-FLORES published a book that offers a global-level description of the current status of wastewater use in agriculture. The book also discusses technical, institutional, and policy challenges and opportunities for safe water reuse. *Safe Use of Wastewater in Agriculture: From Concept to Implementation*

PROJECT
Alternative water sources
A UNU-INWEH project demonstrated how integrating gender considerations into fog water collection systems can improve the lives of women and girls in low- and middle-income communities and countries; revealed the negative impacts of high-magnesium waters and soils on the environment and agricultural production; and developed a four-step process for promoting safely managed wastewater. *Unconventional Water Resources*

PROJECT
Water-relevant policy
Through a collaborative project, UNU-INWEH produced the SDG 6 Policy Support System, an online tool to address water-related SDG targets in national, institutional, and policy contexts. This tool is currently being trialled by the governments of five countries and will eventually be rolled out in more countries. It has the potential to positively influence populations that are coping with inadequate water supplies or sanitation facilities. *Water-related Sustainable Development Goals*

EXPERT
“Water is not just a natural resource. It’s the source of life, evolution, development, and peace. We need to understand the larger merit in truly valuing water. My work at UNU supports integrated thinking on the water security agenda to inform policy, programmes, and investments in the water sector.”

Nidhi Nagabhatla
UNU-INWEH Senior Researcher
PROJECT

**Constructed wetlands**

UNU–FLORES released a preliminary version of the Constructed Wetlands Knowledge Platform. With existing data unevenly distributed, this platform represents a “one-stop” solution provider for constructed wetlands–related data and information to support research, policy development, implementation, and financing of nature-based solutions for sustainable development. *The Multifunctionality of Constructed Wetlands*

REPORT

**Water as a global resource**

UNU–EHS researchers contributed to a GRoW (Water as a Global Resource) position paper that highlights key scientific challenges to achieving SDG 6. The paper emphasises the need to build a better evidence base for achieving and monitoring SDG targets. *Strengthening the Evidence Base for the SDG Process*

ARTICLE

“Just as you cannot manage your bank account without knowing how much money you have, it is all but impossible to make informed water management decisions without reliable, sufficient, and freely available water data. Obtaining such data, however … has always proven difficult.”

Excerpt from “Time to Resolve a Cursed Old Water Problem”, published by *Inter Press Service*; Author: Vladimir Smakhtin, UNU–INWEH Director
Nearly one billion people worldwide live without electricity, and some three billion people lack access to clean cooking fuels and technologies. While the use of renewable energy sources to produce electricity has advanced rapidly, progress in the utilisation of non-polluting energy sources for use in transport, heating, and cooling is lagging. As demand for energy continues to grow, progress on SDG 7 is essential. UNU research focuses on the efficient use of renewable and low-carbon energy sources, and in particular on how integrated practices can improve energy efficiency and resource recycling, thus making modern energy production cleaner and more affordable.

**PROJECT**

**Energy from biomass**
UNU-INRA assessed the uptake of bamboo biomass energy in Ghana and explored its potential and the enabling environment needed to ensure that green businesses operating in the area of alternative energy production are profitable. The findings will inform energy policies that encourage the use of bamboo biomass as an alternative domestic and industrial energy source. *Promoting Environmental Conservation through Sustainable Energy Solutions*

**Low-carbon technologies**
A UNU-IAS project compiled best practices for transferring low-carbon technology to developing countries. The project focused on advancing strategies and partnerships for international cooperation on low-carbon technologies; analysing international strategies for promoting low-carbon technologies; finding solutions to overcome barriers to technology diffusion; and understanding the role of city-to-city cooperation. *Low Carbon Technology Transfer*

**TRAINING**

**Geothermal training programme**
UNU-GTP offers an annual six-month specialised postgraduate training programme to help developing countries build capacity related to geothermal exploration and development. *UNU-GTP Six-month Training Programme*

**Geothermal development training**
UNU-GTP offered a five-month Geothermal Diploma Course in El Salvador for Spanish-speaking geothermal professionals in Latin America. The course covered specific aspects of geothermal development or particular phases of the studies. *Geothermal Diploma Course*

**EXPERT**

“Human life depends on natural resources. To secure our livelihoods it is essential that we understand resource circulation and adjust our activities accordingly. My work contributes to designing a future in which human activities exist in harmony with the ecosystems in which we live.”

Keiko Hori
UNU-IAS Research Assistant
**TRAINING**

**Geothermal short courses**

In October, in conjunction with the 7th African Rift Geothermal Conference, UNU-GTP organised two "customer-designed" short courses – one on "Management and Financing for Geothermal Project Development" and one on "Low-Temperature Geothermal Systems and Direct Use Applications". UNU-GTP also conducted SDG short courses on "Geothermal Reservoir Characterisation" (in El Salvador) and "Geothermal Exploration and Development" (in Kenya). **UNU-GTP Customer-designed Short Courses**

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**ARTICLE**

"Our time on earth is transient. Fossil–fuel powered economic prosperity is being challenged from all sides, even at a time when some African countries are 'courting' new discoveries of oil and gas. The burden of responsibility to act now and widen the space to 'old' and 'new' stakeholders, not least the private sector and the youth, is a current as strong as climate change itself. If we ignore this call, we do so at our peril."

Excerpt from “Africa, Katowice, and Climate Equity: The Dragon That Will Not Be Slayed!”, published by Modern Ghana; Author: Fatima Denton, UNU-INRA Director

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**REPORT**

**Women in geothermal industries**

UNU-GEST published a paper detailing the findings of a collaborative project that studied the positions of women in geothermal industries in several different countries, and the challenges they face. The paper offers a visual ethnographic analysis of women in geothermal industries in Japan, Ethiopia, Iceland, Kenya, and Nigeria. A documentary film on the project is planned. **Full Steam Ahead: Women in the Geothermal Industry**
GOAL 9

Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

Robust infrastructure is a fundamental requirement for the industrial and technological progress needed to drive sustainable development. But while medium- and high-tech products account for 80% of manufacturing output in industrialised economies, their share is barely 10% in least-developed countries. Therefore, renewed investment in sustainable resource value chains is vital to achieve SDG 9. UNU research focuses on strengthening the development linkages that catalyse innovation, foster equal resource benefits, and build resilient urban systems.

REPORT

Production value chains
UNU-MERIT is providing inputs into Indonesia’s medium-term policy planning to help that country diversify and upgrade within the industrial sector. The Institute contributed three chapters to a policy report, addressing the role of global value chains as a mechanism to upgrade and increase the complexity of Indonesia’s production. Report to the Indonesian Ministry of Planning

POLICY BRIEF

Innovation for development
A UNU-MERIT policy brief outlined the challenges and opportunities that members of the Economic Community of West African States face in the context of the African Union Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa, and of the broader African Union Agenda 2063. The brief was part of a series of workshops and publications to track and shape innovation policies across Africa while encouraging peer-to-peer learning. Innovation in the Middle East: Challenges for Promoting ST&I Policy

PROJECT

Artificial intelligence
UNU-CPR supported the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in their efforts to draft a strategy on new technologies. Drawing on a mandate in that strategy, UNU-CPR created an Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Global Governance platform that serves as a forum for researchers, policy actors, and corporate thought leaders to provide insights and explore public policy challenges relating to AI. Secretary-General’s Strategy on New Technologies

TRAINING

Innovation in the Middle East
UNU-MERIT joined six other UN entities in organising a week-long capacity building workshop in Amman, Jordan, on SDG-related science and innovation policies. The workshop focused on financial and non-financial instruments; policies for increasing the supply of technically trained persons for research and development; and how to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of specific instruments of innovation policies. Innovation Policies for the SDGs in the Arab Region

EXPERT

“Industry is an essential driver of sustainable development. But in developing economies, firms need more innovation and stronger technological capabilities. My research at UNU strives to promote these firms’ efforts to benefit from global value chains, and to boost innovation in developing countries.”

Carlo Pietrobelli
UNU-MERIT Professorial Fellow
EVENT

Linking research and development
UNU-EHS jointly organised a three-day “Research-2-Practice Forum” to discuss innovative solutions to challenges in renewable energy, water, and climate change on the African continent. Outcomes included several new strategic partnerships in research, practice, and policy for institutions in Africa and internationally, and laid the groundwork for further collaboration via innovation hubs such as AfriLabs. Higher Education Cooperation with the Pan African University Institute of Water and Energy Sciences (including Climate Change) - Phase 2

BOOK

Extractives for development
UNU-WIDER published a book that explores the prospects of developing countries for using oil, gas, and mining to achieve inclusive change. The book examines the ways in which the potential of extractives for the inclusive development agenda can be realised more effectively, and explores the building and strengthening of local institutions, the management of resources, and the development of appropriate, transparent policies. Extractive Industries: The Management of Resources as a Driver of Sustainable Development

ARTICLE

“As long as we unquestioningly accept roads as the easy answer for issues of urban congestion and economic growth, we will ignore the long-term land use, social equity, and, indeed, mobility problems we are creating. If we want sustainable, equitable, and healthy cities — in Penang and throughout Malaysia — roads must stop being our sole solution.”

Excerpt from “Going Off-road for Sustainability, Equity, and Health” published by Malay Mail; Authors: multiple UNU-IIGH researchers
Overcoming inequality is a central objective of the SDGs. While progress has been made, many insidious effects of inequalities remain — income inequality as well as other economic and societal inequalities based on disability, race, ethnicity, gender, or religion. UNU research is helping to build comprehensive databases that can inform policymakers and governments of where, why, and to what extent economic and social disparities exist. By uncovering the social and political dynamics that drive inequality, UNU research is helping governments respond to both persistent and emerging trends, and thereby contribute to achieving SDG 10.

EXPERT
“The exploitation of migrant workers is a central concern in many countries. I am passionate about researching information and communication technologies that allow migrant workers to enhance their structural empowerment, dignity, and physical integrity, in order to positively impact their work conditions.”

Hannah Thinyane
UNU–CS Principle Research Fellow

GOAL 10
Reduced Inequalities

PROJECT
Inclusive societies
UNU-GCM conducted extensive research on migration and society, with a focus on providing evidence-based recommendations for diverse, inclusive, and plural societies. A study undertaken in 2018, focusing on reception centres in Italy and Spain, examined what activities are most welcoming for those on the move and have benefitted newcomers as well as established members of the receiving society. Outputs included several policy-relevant reports. Places of Welcome. Best Practices in the Sustainable Inclusion of Newcomers

TOOL
Migration and refugees
In late 2018, UNU-CRIS released a simulation game on European Union (EU) – United Nations (UN) coordination of the migration/refugee crisis. In the game, students participate in an urgent special meeting of the European Council, tasked with preparing an agenda of how the EU proposes to tackle the ongoing crisis. By year end, the simulation game had been used by five partners of the Jean Monnet Network on EU–UN Relations (EUN–NET), thus enhancing cooperation between academic and civil society stakeholders, and forging a common public space for informed analysis and debate on current EU–UN issues. UNU-CRIS Simulation Game

Hannah Thinyane
UNU–CS Principle Research Fellow
**PROJECT**

**Tax-benefit policies**
UNU-WIDER is undertaking a major research initiative that constructs tax-benefit microsimulation models for selected developing countries. These models enable governments to understand how taxes and benefits affect various aspects of the economy and can help estimate the effect of policy changes on people’s lives. **SOUTHMOD – Simulating Tax and Benefit Policies for Development**

**PROJECT**

**Inclusive economic development**
In cooperation with key local partners, UNU-WIDER is looking at ways to support policymaking for inclusive growth and economic transformation in the Southern Africa region. The project seeks to bridge the gap between research and policymaking to offer solutions to the current bottlenecks in the economy of South Africa. **SA-TIED: Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development**

**ARTICLE**

“In the face of divisive nationalist rhetoric — such as that embraced by recent political campaigns for Brexit and the election of Donald Trump — where should ‘evidence-based’ interventions be focused to most effectively eliminate discrimination, shape public discourse, and protect the rights of refugees and migrants?”

Excerpt from “Refugees, Racism, and Xenophobia: What Works to Reduce Discrimination?”, published by Our World; co-authored by Nicola Pocock of UNU-IIGH
GOAL 11
Sustainable Cities & Communities

Today, more than half of the world’s population lives in urban areas; by 2050, the proportion will be two-thirds. Achieving Goal 11 will hinge on urban planning and governance modalities initiated now to address all areas of city life – from safe and affordable housing, health care, water and sanitation systems, and employment opportunities to maintaining green public spaces, ensuring responsible natural resources consumption, providing public transportation options, and reducing vulnerability to natural hazards. UNU research seeks to overcome the tendency to treat these issues as disparate problems, and instead promotes solutions that collectively tackle these interconnected urban challenges.

PROJECT
Smart cities
UNU-EGOV is leading a Blockchain4Cities project as part of the UN’s United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative. The aim is to design a framework for the adoption and use of distributed ledger technology to facilitate sustainability in smart city development in such contexts as energy usage or waste management. Transforming Urban Centres into Smart Cities with Emerging Technologies

PROJECT
Resilient communities
UNU-INRA collected detailed information about current and potential impacts of climate change on ecological and socio-economic systems in the Fresco lagoon landscape of Côte d’Ivoire. The study identified existing and potential adaptive responses that can be implemented to improve the resilience of local communities and ecosystems. Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment of Fresco Lagoon Landscape

PROJECT
Knowledge resources
UNU-EGOV has documented more than 100 case studies on smart cities’ experiences to create an online platform of knowledge resources for Indian smart cities. The portal’s content is being explored for use in specific training programmes that will be incorporated in the UNU-EGOV portfolio. Transforming Urban Centers into Smart Cities with Emerging Technologies

EVENT
Urban vulnerability
UNU-IAS co-organised a public seminar that questioned the viability of the prevailing model of urban sustainability, and explored the risks and challenges facing international cities in the context of resource limitations, population growth, and food security issues. Participants also discussed Japan’s current trajectory and future implications for the promotion of sustainable cities. Climate Change, Globalisation and the Vulnerability of Cities

EXPERT
“Without proper urban water services — even in poor and rural settings — we cannot achieve healthy living conditions. My research seeks to illuminate the connections between urban growth and sanitation, and to provide clean water and sanitation to all.”

Serena Caucci
UNU-FLORES Research Associate
TRAINING

Land restoration
UNU-LRT co-created and launched a free massive open online course (MOOC) that offers comprehensive knowledge on landscape degradation and restoration from environmental and economic perspectives. The course focuses on how the restoration of degraded landscapes can return natural, social, and financial capital that, in turn, can support local communities, people’s livelihoods, and well-being. A Business Approach to Sustainable Landscape Restoration

TRAINING

Digital certification
UNU-EGOV offered a two-week training course in Lisbon on planning, design, monitoring, and assessment of national platforms for digital certification (from both technical and legal perspectives) for high-level public officials from African Portuguese-speaking countries. UNU-EGOV also conducted a readiness study on the legal and technical maturity of these countries with respect to digital signatures and digital certification. High-level Training on State Digital Certification Platforms

TRAINING

Risk and adaptation
UNU-EHS hosted a summer academy on risk and adaptation in the context of urbanisation – the first of three planned academies for scientists, policymakers, UN officials, and other stakeholders. By formulating advancements in methods and tools to assess future risk trends, these academies will generate pragmatic, policy-relevant knowledge. Outputs will be included in UNFCCC’s Nairobi Work Programme and help overhaul UNFCCC’s Guidelines for National Adaptation Plans. Summer Academy on World Risk and Adaptation Futures

TRAINING

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ARTICLE

“Humans typically don’t take things seriously until we face limits. The only way to ensure a successful circular economy, therefore, will be to introduce strict legal boundaries to limit the exploitation of our finite natural resources.”

Excerpt from “Going Full Circle: Why Recycling Isn’t Enough”, published by The Japan Times; Author: Hiroshan Hettiarachchi, UNU-FLORES Academic Officer

PROJECT

Urban migration
Cities, particularly in Asia and Africa, are at the forefront of receiving migrants, giving rise to a range of humanitarian challenges. UNU-GCM research explored the nexus of urban expansion and migration. The specific focus of the project, which produced multiple policy reports, was on how global international migration is experienced at local levels, and how good policies and practices at the local level can contribute towards the good governance of human mobility. Migration and Cities
Ensuring long-term sustainable development requires that we decouple economic growth from resource use by changing the ways in which we produce and consume goods and resources. The efficient management of our shared natural resources, and of the ways in which we dispose of toxic waste and pollutants, are requisites for achieving Goal 12. This requires building sustainable infrastructure, ensuring efficient use of resources, generating cleaner energy, and producing less waste. UNU research focuses on improving the governance, processes, and practices of the world’s current product cycles and value chains.

**EVENT**

**Mineral resources governance**
In September, UNU-INRA organised a lecture by outgoing Director Elias Ayuk to promote the adoption of a new mineral resources governance framework: the “Sustainable Development Licence to Operate”. The lecture, which highlighted the building blocks critical for a robust governance instrument, was attended by key stakeholders including heads of UN agencies in Ghana, members of the diplomatic corps, and representatives of academia and the media. *Mineral Resources Governance for Sustainable Development: A New Framework*

**REPORT**

**Agricultural heritage**
A UNU-IAS report documented the Institute’s work with local communities and various stakeholders to increase understanding of the value of traditional agricultural systems and their relevance for achieving sustainable development. For the past decade, UNU-IAS has been actively promoting the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems concept in Japan as a means of helping to conserve valuable agricultural (including forestry and fisheries) systems and their biodiversity. *The Road to Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS): United Nations University’s Journey with Local Communities*

**REPORT**

**Sustainable soil and water management**
A UNU-INRA working paper explored whether using “green credit” can be a strong incentive and impetus for getting smallholder farmers in Kenya to invest in sustainable soil and water management practices that will reduce soil erosion and promote soil fertility and land productivity. *Feasibility of Green Credit as an Incentive for Natural Resource Management in Kenya*

**EXPERT**

“...The world generated 45 million tonnes of e–waste in 2016, including computers, mobile phones, and televisions. E–waste damages our environment, makes us sick, and wastes scarce resources. I am passionate about reducing global e–waste to zero.”

Rüdiger Kühr
UNU-VIE SCYCLE Director
UNU–FLORES published a book that addresses the interconnectedness and complexity of environmental resources management. The book explores how monitoring and implementing a water-soil-waste nexus approach can help achieve the SDGs, and provides a detailed description of how the different resource systems interact with and support each other.

Managing Water, Soil and Waste Resources to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals: Monitoring and Implementation of Integrated Resources Management

UNU–IAS offers two postgraduate degree programmes: a two-year master’s programme that provides students with the knowledge and practical skills necessary to contribute to solving challenges of sustainability, and a three-year doctoral programme that aims to equip graduates with multidisciplinary knowledge about the role of environmental sustainability in addressing current issues related to global change. MSc in Sustainability PhD in Sustainability Science

UNU–LRT offers an annual six-month training programme on land restoration and sustainable land management. The aims are to strengthen the capacity of local institutions within UNU–LRT partner countries and to graduate specialists who can act on their knowledge to drive actions at local community to policy levels. UNU–LRT Six-month Training Programme

“Amid this focus on the plastic waste problem, the Chinese government enforced an import ban on 24 waste types (including plastic) earlier this year as part of the 'National Sword' campaign. China has been the primary destination for the world’s recyclable materials since the 1980s. Between 2006 and 2012, plastic waste imports increased from 6 million to 9 million tons and 18 percent of that came from Japan, second in volume only to the United States.”

Excerpt from "China’s Waste Ban is a Wake-up Call for Japan", published by The Japan Times; Author: Leticia dos Muchangos, UNU-FLORES Postdoctoral Fellow
Climate change contributes to a range of global threats, including higher average temperatures, rising sea levels, and the increasing severity and frequency of extreme weather events—the devastating effects of which cause average annual losses amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars. To reduce the catastrophic impacts on communities, livelihoods, and economies, global action to address Goal 13 must be swift and coordinated. UNU research focuses on helping those most impacted by climate change to improve their adaptive capabilities and resilience.

**PROJECT**

Livelihood resilience
When livelihood systems are not resilient, short-term environmental shocks can have long-term impacts. UNU-EHS participated in a five-year research-to-action collaboration to increase scientific understanding of the weather-related (cyclone) disaster preparedness in an area of Bangladesh, and to apply the findings towards community-led solutions for improving the living conditions of vulnerable people. The research team worked closely with the local populations and built local capacity through repeated training sessions. *Gibika and Resilience Academy: Livelihood Resilience in Bangladesh – Turning Research into Action*

**GUIDEBOOK**

Ecosystem-based adaption
UNU-EHS published a guidebook for policymakers and practitioners on the use of climate risk assessments for the identification, spatial planning, monitoring, and evaluation of ecosystem-based adaptation measures. The guidebook has been piloted multiple times in Central Asia and Latin America, and is being mainstreamed into National Adaptation Plans. *Climate Risk Assessment for Ecosystem-based Adaptation: A Guidebook for Planners and Practitioners*

**REPORT**

Global warming
UNU-IAS contributed to an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report on the potential effects of global warming. A UNU-IAS researcher served as lead author of a chapter that addresses the effects of climate change on natural and human systems and revisits the major categories of risk. *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*

**EXPERT**

“Critical infrastructure — like electricity, telecommunications, transportation, and water supply — plays a key role in determining a society’s vulnerability to natural hazards. My research aims to determine what levels of these critical services societies need to survive and thrive in the aftermath of natural hazards.”

Simone Sandholz
UNU-EHS Associate Academic Officer
TOOL
Climate insurance
InsuRisk is an assessment tool aimed at developing a comprehensive, objective methodology that provides transparent and comparable information on low- to middle-income countries’ vulnerability to climate and disaster risks, and their readiness for insurance solutions. The prototype tool was designed by UNU-EHS in line with the InsuResilience global partnership’s objective to enable access to climate risk insurance for an additional 400 million of the most vulnerable and poor populations by 2020. InsuRisk Assessment Tool: Disaster Risk and Readiness for Insurance Solutions

TRAINING
Climate policy research
UNU-EHS has joined the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in a collaborative initiative that offers young graduates from developing countries (particularly women from least developed countries) a unique opportunity to start their career at the interface between international climate policy development and research via fellowship placements at both UNU-EHS and UNFCCC. UNFCCC-UNU Early Career Climate Fellowship Programme

ARTICLE
“... economies with high (private) insurance coverage bounce back quicker to pre-disaster development once hit by earthquakes, storms or floods... But before we look to climate insurance as a panacea for disaster recovery, we must understand its strengths, and its limitations. Research from the United Nations University finds that climate insurance offers a compelling solution to increased climate disasters...”

Excerpt from “Climate Risk Insurance: Preparing for the Next Superstorm” published by Our World; Authors: Sönke Kreft and Michael Zissener, UNU-EHS
Our oceans, which cover three-quarters of the earth’s surface, suffer from overfishing, growing acidification, and excessive nutrient enrichment (leading to oxygen depletion) in coastal areas. The land surface covered by vegetation, meanwhile, is experiencing persistent decline in productivity and biodiversity, due in part to unsustainable agriculture practices and deforestation. Continued human well-being is dependent on our success in achieving Goals 14 and 15. UNU research examines both human-ocean and human-terrestrial ecosystem relationships to help ensure mutual (human and environmental) welfare. Our work blends the latest scientific knowledge with an appreciation of traditional management practices to foster the sustainable use of our planet’s precious living resources.

**GOALS 14 & 15**

**Life Below Water, Life on Land**

An article on the UNU-FLORES website explained why afforestation may not have a positive effect on water provision. The article highlighted a study which showed that, under certain climate conditions, afforestation can result in a decline in water supply, and pointed out how these negative effects could be mitigated. *Afforestation Increases Water Supply - But Only with These Considerations*

**EVENT**

**World Oceans Day**

In June, to celebrate World Oceans Day, UNU-IAS co-organised a symposium featuring popular Japanese TV personality and fish expert Sakana-kun. Participants discussed the impacts of people on oceans, the conservation of marine biodiversity, and the sustainable use of ocean resources. *Preserving the Bounty of the Sea: SDG 14 and Japan*

**TRAINING**

**Fisheries management**

Value chains can promote the optimisation of economic and social benefits and ensure that the investments as well the risks of production are shared among a range of participants. UNU-FTP co-organised a three-day workshop in Trinidad that explored how to identify and manage value chains in the Caribbean fisheries. The workshop was attended by participants from industry, academia, and government. *Fisheries Value Chain Management Workshop*

**TRAINING**

**Fisheries training**

UNU-FTP offers an annual six-month fisheries training programme that helps participants to actively contribute to the work done in their organisations and to develop the potential in their home countries in fisheries management, fish handling and processing, and aquaculture. *UNU-FTP Six-month Training Programme*

**EXPERT**

“Finding water in water-scarce areas is key to sustainable development. My research aims to trigger cooperation on the use of unconventional water resources. I am passionate about bringing water to those without, through innovative means, and informing water policy and investment towards this end.”

**Manzoor Qadir**

UNU-INWEH Assistant Director
REPORT
Biodiversity
UNU–IAS published a report on integrated approaches to the management of production landscapes and seascapes, and their potential for mainstreaming biodiversity. It presents the findings of a two–year research project that sought to identify experiences and lessons learned and key messages to be shared in support of revising existing national strategies and action plans and future policy development. Research Report on Development and Implementation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs): Toward Realization of Societies in Harmony with Nature

POLICY BRIEF
Integrated landscape management
A UNU–IAS policy brief considered the cultural, technical, and economic factors that influence incentive systems to encourage integrated management of landscapes and seascapes by incorporating high levels of human production activities. The brief offered lessons from Asia, such as linking livelihood enhancement and ecosystem–service provision, integrating multiple knowledge systems at the landscape level, and implementing innovative performance–based incentive systems. Mainstreaming Incentive Systems for Integrated Landscape Management: Lessons from Asia

ARTICLE
“Coastal river deltas are important hotspots of global change and, being highly populated, are ecologically and economically important hubs. Understanding the challenges faced by these unique landscapes and its inhabitants will help us to address the sustainability changes of today and tomorrow.”

Excerpt from “How Do You Reduce Disaster Risk in River Deltas”, published by Thomson Reuters Foundation; Authors: Zita Sebesvari and Michael Hagenlocher, UNU–EHS
GOAL 16

Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

We live in a divided world: while some regions have enjoyed sustained peace and security, others continue to suffer from extended cycles of conflict and violence, or the inconsistent application of law and uneven access to justice. Achievement of Goal 16 is vital for inclusive sustainable development. UNU’s research on the changing nature of global conflict provides insights into the adaptations needed to reduce violence and its impact on society, including in the context of crime, terrorism, and rapid urbanisation. Meanwhile, through our work on the drivers and impacts of migration we are helping policymakers to improve legal protections for migrant families and ensure their safety, dignity, and prosperity.

EVENT

The EU’s international role
UNU-CRIS co-organised an international conference for academics and policymakers in Brussels to consider the European Union’s role on the international stage. Topics included international security; climate, energy, and the environment; the external dimension of EU migration and rule of law policies; and economic governance and globalisation. *The European Union in International Affairs*

PROJECT

Effective governance
UNU-EGOV helped the State Secretariat of Justice of Portugal define key indicators to assess the effectiveness of the Ministry of Justice. The project provided a detailed analysis of Portugal’s performance for each of the relevant indicators, identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Portuguese justice system, and defined priority indicators for its more effective functioning. *Key Indicators to Assess the Effectiveness of the (Portugal) Ministry of Justice*

PROJECT

Preventive diplomacy
UNU-CPR carried out two projects in support of the UN Secretary-General’s emphasis on prevention of violent conflict. One project examined several positive UN Resident Coordinator (RC) experiences to extract good practices and lessons that can inform and inspire RCs deployed in countries experiencing crisis or political tension. The other project developed an assessment framework for the planning of preventive diplomacy interventions that is already being used by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). *Sharpening the Resident Coordinator’s Prevention Toolkit; Strengthening the UN’s Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation Efforts in Fragile and Conflict-affected States*

EXPERT

“The UN was set up to prevent the kinds of violent conflicts that are costing hundreds of thousands of lives every year. And with global warming and population growth surging, the risks are set to increase. I want to help the UN find innovative and effective prevention tools for today’s and tomorrow’s challenges.”

Adam Day
UNU-CPR Head of Programmes
PROJECT

Sanctions and mediation
UNU–CPR launched a project to develop a better understanding of the inter-linkages between UN sanctions and UN-supported mediation processes, and to generate recommendations for best practice. The project has been shaping policy discussions at UN Headquarters in New York: its preliminary findings were referenced in the UN Security Council’s Open Debate on Mediation and Settlement of Disputes, and briefings were held in November for representatives of the DPA and other UN Secretariat members.
UN Sanctions and Mediation: Establishing Evidence to Inform Practice

EVENT

Preventing future conflicts
From late 2017 through early 2018, UNU–CPR convened a speaker series in New York to consider what tomorrow’s conflicts may look like, and how the UN could act to mitigate or prevent them. These events, attended by more than 300 people from 40 Member States, brought over 25 experts to the UN to inform policy deliberations. The results have been compiled into a report that will contribute to helping the United Nations community address several relevant questions. Preventing Tomorrow’s Conflicts: Final Report from a Speaker Series Within the Context of United Nations Discussions on Sustaining Peace

ARTICLE

“Traditional thinking asserts that children who exert some agency in joining armed groups — i.e., are not threatened or coerced — are motivated by anti-social tendencies, ideology and negative emotions: anger, hatred, a need for revenge. But, new research from the United Nations University is challenging this widely held assumption.”
Excerpt from “Driven by Hate? What We’ve Gotten Wrong about Children and Terrorism”, published by The Hill; Author: Siobhan O’Neil, UNU–CPR

PROJECT

ICT-enabled governance
As part of an Erasmus+ project that is contributing to the development of ICT-enabled governance by designing new methods to articulate pressing research priorities and educational curricula, UNU-EGOV led a work package devoted to conducting baseline research and providing training. This effort will converge to develop a novel massive open online course (MOOC) on e-governance. Scientific Foundations, Training and Entrepreneurship Activities in the Domain of ICT-enabled Governance (Gov 3.0)

TRAINING

Public policy and development
UNU-MERIT and the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance offer a Master of Science degree programme that focuses on the question of how public policy can be most effectively and efficiently dealt with in the context of good governance. More than 130 students were enrolled at 2018 year-end, while another 61 graduated during the year. Master of Science in Public Policy and Human Development
Collaboration is an essential foundation for properly understanding and effectively addressing development shortfalls. Goal 17 seeks to rally national governments, the international community, civil society, and the private sector in support of the 2030 Agenda. With expertise in every area of the SDGs, and active partnerships across all of these sectors and particularly global academia, UNU works as a convener of a diverse range of development stakeholders and a facilitator of knowledge dissemination and transfer. Our research activities contribute to both near-term SDG implementation and long-term policy frameworks for sustainability.

PROJECT
Guidelines for partnerships
UNU–IAS collaborated with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to develop a set of technical guidelines for implementing multi-stakeholder partnerships in the Asia–Pacific in support of the SDGs. These guidelines, launched at the 5th Asia–Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in March, were presented in July at an official side event of the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). They have also been adopted by the Government of Indonesia as the basis for its national guidelines. Partnering for Sustainable Development: Guidelines for Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to Implement the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific

EXPERT
“Weak formal institutions and persistent traditional norms exclude millions of people from participation in economic, political, and social life. This exacerbates poverty, inequality, and sympathies for extremist views and behaviour. Through my research I contribute to developing inclusive policies and programmes.”

Eleonora Nillesen
UNU-MERIT Researcher
ARTICLE

“The SDGs give recognition to the role of participation of various sectors of society towards the implementation of the goals. Notwithstanding these sentiments of inclusivity and participation ... there is currently a lack of clear means of engagement of various other stakeholders within the SDG indicator framework.”


REPORT

A citizen’s agenda

In a report launched at the UN World Data Forum, UNU-CS condensed SDG policy-relevant findings of research that explored the dynamics of the participation and engagement of individuals and community-level actors within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report highlighted issues of data marginalisation and exclusion, the case for community-driven indicators and community-based monitoring systems, data ownership and sharing, and citizen-centric data valorisation. Engaging Citizens for Sustainable Development: A Data Perspective

EVENT

Electronic governance

UNU-EGOV is a co-organiser of the annual International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV), which serves as a platform to discuss strategies and policies to improve e-governance. The event promotes regional and international transfer, dissemination, and diffusion of e-governance knowledge and experiences that can inform developing countries in their efforts to formulate sustainable e-governance policies. ICEGOV 2018 was convened in Galway, Ireland, in April. ICEGOV 2018: Transforming Digital Governance for Sustainable and Resilient Societies

EVENT

SDG implementation

UNU-CRIS hosted a workshop that highlighted (i) the achievements and shortfalls of the Millennium Development Goals, and the extent to which these persisted in the SDGs, and (ii) the need to enhance the sustainability and feasibility of the SDGs by introducing them at the subnational level. The audience included practitioners in local business communities as well as faculty and students of neighbouring universities. Challenges and Progress: Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals
Organisational Review

Beyond its roles as a research institution and think tank, UNU offers selected educational and training opportunities across its global network. Internally, gender mainstreaming, partnerships, and strong leadership and governance are important keys to our success. This final section takes a look behind the research to detail who we are, where we are, and how we work – both internally across the UNU system, and externally with a broad network of stakeholders.
Training Tomorrow’s Leaders

UNU offers a range of unique educational courses and programmes. These focus on cross-cutting issues and help equip the leaders of tomorrow with the knowledge and techniques that they will need to effectively address emerging problems and challenges. We award postgraduate (master’s and doctoral) degrees; organise specialised non-degree programmes, courses, and workshops; and provide opportunities through which young researchers can work alongside, and learn from, policy experts.

UNU seeks to ensure that our capacity development activities do not duplicate the efforts of other international and national entities, and that the training we offer complements our research activities, enabling students to both acquire theoretical knowledge and develop applied skills. Furthermore, we aim to achieve a multiplier effect by focusing on “training the trainers”, meeting the needs of research leaders and decision-makers, and educating young scholars who may someday fill those roles.

Postgraduate degree programmes
The University’s Master of Science (MSc) and doctoral (PhD) degree programmes aim to enhance the capacity of young researchers and academics from developing countries, as well as strengthen partnerships with local universities and research institutions. In 2018, our postgraduate programmes included:

- a joint PhD programme in “Integrated Management of Water, Soil, and Waste” (UNU–FLORES and Technical University Dresden)
- a PhD programme in “Innovation, Economics and Governance for Development” (at Maastricht University, co-taught by UNU–MERIT)
- a PhD programme in “Sustainability Science” and an MSc programme in “Sustainability” (UNU–IAS, with the opportunity for a joint diploma in cooperation with the University of Tokyo and Sophia University)
- a joint MSc programme in “Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security” (UNU–EHS and the University of Bonn)
- a joint MSc programme in “Public Policy and Human Development” (UNU–MERIT and Maastricht University)

As of fall 2018, 93 students (58% female; 72% from developing countries) were pursuing a PhD degree at UNU while 245 students (60% female; 34% from developing countries) were seeking an MSc degree. During the year, 97 students (16 PhD, 81 MSc) graduated from these programmes.

Non-degree programmes and courses
UNU also offers a wide variety of specialised training opportunities, ranging from day-long workshops to six-month programmes. Many of these study opportunities – particularly the ones targeting postgraduate-level students and early- and mid-career professionals – lead to the award of a diploma or certificate.

In 2018, the global UNU system organised 164 non-degree training opportunities (programmes, courses, schools, workshops, etc.), of which 53% were held in developing countries. These were attended by more than 4,600 students. Several of the training opportunities offered or co-organised by UNU in 2018 are featured in the “Our Work on the Global Goals” section of this report.
Of particular note are the annual six-month training sessions offered by UNU’s Iceland-based programmes. In 2018, these were attended by 86 students:

- UNU Fisheries Training Programme: 21 fellows from 15 countries
- UNU Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme: 24 fellows from 14 countries
- UNU Geothermal Training Programme: 24 fellows from 14 countries
- UNU Land Restoration Training Programme: 17 fellows from 9 countries

Research-based capacity development
As well as offering formal study programmes and courses, there are opportunities for young scholars and researchers to enhance their skills and knowledge by working alongside UNU staff.

Among the more than 180 projects implemented by UNU in 2018, 57% incorporated both research and capacity development components while another 10% were focused specifically on capacity development.

Other opportunities for young researchers to work with UNU staff at the institute level include a variety of fellowship programmes as well as internship and visiting scholar opportunities.
Collaboration

UNU maintains hundreds of active research alliances and collaborations with partners at all levels: international and regional organisations; government ministries and agencies; non-governmental organisations; universities, research institutes, and think tanks; professional organisations; and private sector entities. This collaborative approach enables us to focus on our strengths; work directly with policymakers; involve larger numbers of experienced researchers, academics, and practitioners in our work; and broadcast our research outputs further than we could on our own.

This section focuses on some of our key 2018 collaborations with UN system entities, national governments, and academia.

UN system partners
UNU engages with key players in the UN policymaking community – including units of the UN Secretariat, the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and numerous agencies, programmes, commissions, funds, and convention secretariats – as a reliable knowledge broker, a neutral voice on global policy challenges, and a source of innovative ideas. In addition to contributing our own policy-oriented research, we also serve as a bridge between the global academic community and the UN system to help to reduce the persistent “research–policy gap”.

- **UNU–CPR** supported the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in its consultations with UN entities on the Secretary-General’s Strategy on New Technologies. UNU–CPR also was an active player in policy discussions at UN Headquarters on the inter-linkages between UN sanctions and UN-supported mediation processes, and on efforts to strengthen the international response to modern slavery and human trafficking.

- **UNU–CPR** worked with UNICEF, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the Governments of Luxembourg and Switzerland on an effort to fill the knowledge gaps about how and why children become associated with, are used by, and leave non-state armed groups. UNU–CPR also participated in a UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration.

- **UNU–CS** was a founding member of the EQUALS Partnership (which promotes awareness of and supports action to achieve gender digital equality) and leads the EQUALS Research Group. Other founding EQUALS partners include the International Telecommunication Union, UN Women, and the International Trade Centre.

- **UNU–EGOV** is a member of the multi-agency United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative (coordinated by ITU, UNECE, and UN-Habitat) and collaborated with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in preparation of the “UN E-Government Survey 2018” report.

- **UNU–EHS** worked with the UN Development Programme on a joint climate risk, adaptation, and insurance project in the Pacific region, and conducted training for the staff of the Convention to Combat Desertification on insurance approaches in the context of drought and desertification. UNU–EHS also administers the collaborative UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – UNU Early Career Climate Fellowship Programme.

- **UNU–FLORES** cooperated with UN–Habitat to develop a monitoring methodology – the Wastewater Reuse Effectiveness Index – for SDG Target 6.3, and with UN-Water in contributing to the 2018 edition of the “United Nations World Water Development Report” and organising two launch events for this global report.

- **UNU–GCM** worked with UN–Habitat to develop a monitoring methodology – the Wastewater Reuse Effectiveness Index – for SDG Target 6.3, and with UN-Water in contributing to the 2018 edition of the “United Nations World Water Development Report” and organising two launch events for this global report.

- **UNU–GCM** worked with the Global Migration Group, International Organization for Migration, United Nations Regional Information Centre (Brussels), and the UN Migration Network.
• **UNU–IAS** worked with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to jointly develop and publish “Guidelines for Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to Implement the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific”; collaborated with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to showcase results from the UNU–IAS International Satoyama Initiative; and contributed to assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, including its Global Assessment and Asia-Pacific Regional Assessment.

• **UNU–IIGH** is working in partnership with UN Women, the UN Development Programme, and the World Health Organisation to analyse return on investment and health gains in mainstreaming of gender approaches in a range of country-based programmes.

• **UNU–INWEH** works with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs to coordinate the multi-agency UN-Water task force that seeks to implement the 2030 Agenda and water-related SDGs, and helped produce the “UN-Water Synthesis Report”.

• **UNU–MERIT** is assisting in the preparations for the next UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) “Industrial Development Report” (2020), and is assisting with UNIDO’s innovation capacity building efforts in India.

• **UNU–WIDER** collaborated with the International Labour Organisation Country Office for Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique to promote and consolidate tax and benefit microsimulation models; with UNICEF in Mozambique on a research initiative on multidimensional poverty of children; and with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Indian Permanent Mission to the UN to host an event reflecting on Asia’s economic development over the past half-century and how the next 25 years might unfold.

**Governmental partners**
UNU enjoys close relationships with the governments of the 14 nations that host our research institutes and other units: Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, USA, and Venezuela. Other national governments whose ministries, departments, or agencies supported our research and capacity development project work and activities in 2018 included, inter alia, Brazil, India, Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, UK, and Viet Nam.

**Academic partners**
UNU maintains close collaborative relationships with dozens of leading universities all over the world, both in education and in research. Of particular note are those universities that host or otherwise support units of the UNU system: Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Ghent University (UNU-CRIS), University of Minho (UNU-EGOV), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UNU-IIGH), University of Ghana (UNU-INRA), McMaster University (UNU-INWEH), Maastricht University (UNU-MERIT), and University of Iceland (UNU Iceland-based programmes). Among the universities that contribute to UNU’s postgraduate degree programmes are University of Bonn (UNU-EHS); Dresden University of Technology (UNU-FLORES); Maastricht University (UNU-MERIT); and University of Tokyo, Sophia University, Tohoku University, and Osaka University (UNU-IAS).
UNU in the Field

Generating policy-relevant findings is the focus of UNU’s work, yet our research is not limited to high-level academic studies and reviews. In many projects, our researchers work at the grass-roots level, seeking to better understand specific, complex, local or regional problems, and to formulate practical, implementable solutions that can have immediate impact to improve the lives of individuals and the functioning of communities.

This UNU research typically involves working with local populations in close cooperation with on-the-ground partners, including local universities or research institutes. This approach ensures that our research findings are not locked away in hard-to-access academic journals or policy reports, but instead are communicated to local populations, students, and civil society in a useful form and timely manner.

Notable examples of UNU’s work “in the field” in 2018 include the following:

- To help the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPKO) improve its approach to dealing with armed groups and protecting civilian populations, UNU-CPR examined the DPKO’s engagement with non-state armed groups in Eastern Congo. UNU-CPR also conducted an analysis of local conflict resolution by UN peace operations in Somalia in support of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).
- UNU-CS worked with partners to develop Apprise, a mobile application that helps front-line responders to identify potential victims of human trafficking. This mobile app is being piloted in Thailand by multiple non-governmental organisations.
- UNU-EGOV, with its host university (the University of Minho) and the Portuguese government, is developing an instrument for assessing the provision of digital public services by national government agencies.
• **UNU-EHS**, in collaboration with the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and Munich Re-Foundation, worked closely with the residents of Dalbanga South village in Bangladesh to increase their understanding of the cyclone early warning system and improve local disaster preparedness.

• **UNU-FLORES** is undertaking extensive field work and on-site activities with local partners in Mexico and Guatemala to understand the differing stakeholder perspectives and needs regarding wastewater treatment and management.

• Through its operating unit in Ishikawa/Kanazawa, **UNU-IAS** is conducting research in cooperation with local stakeholders on the sustainable utilisation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. UNU-IAS also works with local communities and various stakeholders in Asia to support and promote the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

• Through the activities of its Education for Sustainable Development Regional Centres of Expertise initiative and the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net), **UNU-IAS** contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the local and regional levels.

• **UNU-INRA** engaged with local communities in the Fresco Lagoon area of Côte d’Ivoire on a project that collected detailed information on the current and potential impacts of climate change on local ecological and socio-economic systems. Outcomes of this vulnerability assessment will guide resilience-building actions that address the concerns of the project participants.

• **UNU-INRA** investigated the potential of bamboo biomass as a source of energy in Ghana, and the enabling environment needed to ensure the business potential of bamboo biomass energy production.

• A **UNU-INWEH** study on “fog water” collection demonstrated the potential to improve the lives of women and girls in low- and middle-income communities and countries by harnessing alternative water sources.

• **UNU-MERIT** is investigating the impacts of post-harvest storage innovations on food security and welfare in Ethiopia, and the integration of AIDS treatment with food assistance and the subsequent effects on labour supply in Zambia.

• **UNU-WIDER** is supporting efforts by the government of Mozambique and national academia to scale up research and capacity for inclusive growth; assisting the government of Myanmar to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and analysis in support of structural transformation and development; and working with partners in Viet Nam to further develop firm and rural household data sets that can help to forge structural change policies.

• A **UNU-WIDER** collaborative programme on inclusive economic development in Southern Africa facilitated networking and discussion amongst stakeholders to bridge the gap between research and policymaking.

In addition to these research-focused collaborations, we also cooperate with local partners to offer postgraduate-level and specialised training opportunities around the world. In 2018, these included 87 training sessions in developing countries on a wide variety of topics.
The Global UNU System

The United Nations University was established by the UN General Assembly in 1973 as “an international community of scholars, engaged in research, post-graduate training and dissemination of knowledge in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations”.

UNU operates as a global network of academic units — institutes, programmes, and operating units — each with its own particular area(s) of expertise.

UNU Centre
UNU Centre is the coordination hub of the global UNU system. It encompasses UNU Centre in Tokyo (which houses the Office of the Rector and several administrative, academic services, and technical services units), the UNU Vice-Rectorate in Europe in Bonn (UNU-VIE, which also hosts the Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE) Programme), and an adjunct administrative services unit in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

Institutes

- The **UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)** in Bonn, Germany, focuses on risks and adaptation related to environmental hazards and global change, taking into account the interplay between environmental and societal factors.
- The **UNU Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-FLORES)** in Dresden, Germany, investigates problems in the sustainable use and integrated management of environmental resources, particularly water, soil, and waste.
- The **UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA)** in Accra, Ghana, focuses on the sustainable development of Africa's resources in a way that preserves the natural environment, mitigates the effects of climate change, and realises a better quality of life.
- The **UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)** in Tokyo, Japan, focuses on sustainability and the integration of its social, economic, and environmental dimensions.
- The **UNU Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)** in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, investigates pressing water challenges as they impinge on poverty reduction and issues related to improved human well-being, environmental sustainability and growth, and gender equity.
- The **UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS)** in Bruges, Belgium, studies the provision of global and regional public goods, and the processes and consequences of intra- and inter-regional integration (including governance and cooperation).
- The **UNU Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS)** in Macau SAR, China, seeks solutions for the key challenges faced by developing societies through high-impact innovations in computing and communication technologies.
- The **UNU Institute on Globalization, Culture, and Mobility (UNU-GCM)** in Barcelona, Spain, investigates the socio-cultural aspects of migration in the context of globalisation, including intercultural dialogue, statelessness, gender, and urban-centred diasporas.
- The **UNU International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH)** in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, focuses on global health, conducting policy-relevant, gender-sensitive analysis to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of health programmes worldwide.
- The **UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT)** in Maastricht, Netherlands, explores the social, political, and economic factors that drive technological innovation, with a focus on creation, diffusion, and access to knowledge.
- The **UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER)** in Helsinki, Finland, investigates issues that affect the living conditions of the world’s poorest people, and the developing world more generally, in relation to human survival, peace, economic development, and social welfare.
Programmes and other academic units

• The **UNU Biotechnology Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNU-BIOLAC)** in Caracas, Venezuela, focuses on solving priority problems and topics of the Latin America and the Caribbean region through the application of biotechnology.

• The **UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR)** in New York, NY, USA, focuses on major policy processes in the area of international peace and security, global development, and humanitarian affairs.

• The **UNU Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV)** in Guimarães, Portugal, focuses on the mechanisms of governance and the building of effective governance capabilities through strategic applications of digital technologies in support of sustainable development.

UNU’s four programmes based in Reykjavik, Iceland, offer annual five- or six-month training programmes as well as specialised short courses. They are the:

• **UNU Fisheries Training Programme (UNU-FTP)**
• **UNU Geothermal Training Programme (UNU-GTP)**
• **UNU Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST)**
• **UNU Land Restoration Training Programme (UNU-LRT)**
Human & Financial Resources

Personnel
The global UNU system comprises a diverse group of researchers and managers possessing a broad and in–depth range of expertise spanning a wide range of issues. This talent extends across the five continents where UNU has a presence. The year-end personnel complement of the global UNU system was 616 (of whom 38% were developing country nationals).

We are committed to achieving gender balance and ensuring gender equality within the global UNU system. The ratio of women working at UNU has risen steadily in recent years, surpassing the 50 percent mark (52% female, 48% male) for the first time in 2018.

UNU is also approaching gender parity in its academic leadership. As of December 2018, women constituted 47% of UNU staff at professional (P-3) and higher categories – more than triple the percentage of female staff members at those levels just six years ago.

UNU employment practices also strive to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for persons with disabilities and to prevent any form of disability–based exclusion or discrimination.

Budget
UNU receives no funds from the regular UN budget. Our work is funded entirely through voluntary contributions:

• core funding (primarily recurring host country contributions plus investment income derived from the UNU Endowment Fund)
• special project contributions (SPCs) obtained from host governments, UN Member States, foundations, agencies, international organisations, and other sources for specific academic projects

In 2018, UNU received contributions of almost $36.9 million: see the Contributions Received table for a list of the major contributors.

The UNU budget for the current (2018–2019) biennium is US$108.5 million: core funding of $74.2 million and SPCs of $34.3 million.
# Contributions Received

**1 January - 31 December 2018**

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<tr>
<th>GOVERNMENTS</th>
<th>US Dollars*</th>
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<td>African Development Bank Group</td>
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<td>Stichting Maastricht Economic Research Institute on Innovation and Technology</td>
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*Contribution figures are converted to US dollar equivalents and rounded to the nearest dollar; subtotals may reflect rounding errors.*

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The governing board of the University is the Council of the United Nations University. The UNU Council has 16 members: 12 appointed members (who serve in an individual capacity, not as representatives of their countries), the UNU Rector, and three ex officio members: the UN Secretary-General, the UNESCO Director-General, and the UNITAR Executive Director. In 2018, the UNU Council met twice; in its 69th session on 4–5 June in Bonn, Germany, and in its 70th session on 10–11 December 2018 in Tokyo, Japan.

The chief academic and administrative officer of UNU is the Rector, who holds the rank of UN Under-Secretary-General. Based at UNU Headquarters in Tokyo, the Rector is supported by the Office of the Rector staff and advised by a Management Group comprising the Vice-Rectors, Director of Administration, and Executive Officer.

Each institute of the UNU system is headed by a Director, who benefits from the guidance of an international Advisory Board. The directors meet annually in a gathering known as the Conference of Directors (CONDIR), where they discuss matters of policy and coordination. The 50th session of CONDIR was convened at UNU Headquarters in Tokyo on 7–8 December in Tokyo, and on 10 December CONDIR members and UNU Council members met for a full day of joint meetings.

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- Professor Carlos Henrique de Brito Cruz (Brazil), Scientific Director, São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP); Professor, Gleb Wataghin Physics Institute, State University of Campinas
- Professor Simon Chesterman (Australia), Dean, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore
- Ambassador Elizabeth Cousens (USA), Deputy Chief Executive Officer, United Nations Foundation
- Ms Isabel Guerrero Pulgar (Chile), Director, IMAGO Global Grassroots; Lecturer at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Ms Angela Kane (Germany), Senior Fellow, Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation; Professor, Sciences Po
- Dr Segenet Kelemu (Ethiopia), Director General and CEO, International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology
- Dr Bassma Kodmani (Syria), Executive Director, Arab Reform Initiative
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- Director-General of UNESCO
- Executive Director of UNITAR
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- Executive Officer David Passarelli

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- UNU-EHS Director Jakob Rhyner (through Sept.); Director Dirk Messner (from Sept.)
- UNU-FLORES Officer-in-Charge Kai Schwaerzel (through Aug.); Director Edeltraud Günther (from Sept.)
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- UNU-IAS Director Kazuhiko Takemoto
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- UNU-MERIT Director Bart Verspagen
- UNU-WIDER Director Finn Tarp; Director-designate Kunal Sen (from Sept.)

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- UNU-CPR Director James Cockayne
- UNU-EGOV Head Delfina Soares
- UNU-FTP Programme Director Tumi Tómasson
- UNU-GEST Programme Director Irma Erlingsdóttir
- UNU-GTP Programme Director Ludvik Georgsson
- UNU-LRT Programme Director Hafdis Hanna Ægisdóttir