

# Higher education for today and tomorrow: university appraisal for diversity, innovation and change towards sustainable development

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**Abstract** This article serves as a position paper of a consortium of universities in the Asia–Pacific region working to address challenges of sustainable development and rapidly changing social, economic and natural environments. Member universities of ProSPER.Net (Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network) have embarked on a project to develop an alternative university appraisal system that would potentially become a viable alternative to the existing higher education ranking and assessment systems perceived as constraining, yet, powerful. The article discusses the changing landscape for knowledge creation and the need for universities to assume new roles in a new kind of modernity—variously termed as “liquid modernity” (Z. Bauman), “reflexive modernization” (U. Beck) or other neologisms. It recognises that the mainstream ranking and assessment systems are powerful guiding systems for higher education institutions (HEIs) and, if modified, could be a significant force for transformation towards a more sustainable future. Recognising the need for HEIs to address societal challenges and needs, the Alternative University Appraisal (AUA) project of ProSPER.Net starts by reviewing existing models of recognition and appraisal of various aspects of HEIs’ work and aims at creating space

for individual and collective reflection on HEI practices and outcomes. In addition to extensive consultations among ProSPER.Net members, as well as with other higher education actors and international organisations addressing higher education for sustainability, cross-sectoral consultations, assessments of the uncertainties and pertinent trends, and engagement with policy-making processes would be required for the AUA system to become a guiding force that shapes higher education of today and tomorrow.

**Keywords** Higher education · Ranking · Appraisal · Education for sustainable development (ESD) · Transformation

## Introduction

This article is a product of much thinking that has gone into establishing and facilitating the network for the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research (ProSPER.Net) and should be considered as a work in progress. ProSPER.Net is a consortium of leading higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Asia–Pacific region launched with funding support from the Ministry of the Environment, Japan. The ProSPER.Net founding members include TERI University (India), University of Tokyo (Japan), Yonsei University (Korea), Universiti Sains Malaysia (Malaysia), Chulalongkorn University (Thailand) and the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), among others.

Since its inception, many ProSPER.Net members have been positioning themselves as agents pursuing change towards sustainable development within the higher education system, while having in mind a broader context of society in which HEIs operate. The consortium members

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have formulated a number of joint projects that aim at the transformation of their own practices (i.e. through the projects of reorientation of business schools, faculty training and education of policy makers for sustainability), as well as the whole institution of higher learning (e.g. through the work on “core competencies” and alternative university appraisal). This article is a reflection on the position of the ProSPER.Net members on the change, challenges and opportunities for HEIs in pursuit of sustainable development.

### **In search of new roles for higher education institutions in the 21st century**

The discourses of sustainable development and sustainability have gained political and social momentum as a process of “reflexive modernization” (Beck 1992, 2009). There is no doubt that HEIs can play a significant role in contributing to a more sustainable world by addressing sustainability through their major functions of education, research and outreach. In order for HEIs to play a role in transition to sustainability, however, HEIs need to go beyond modifying their activities by mainstreaming sustainability components. Modern HEIs have been part and parcel of individual and collective ‘development’ which has pursued improvement in living standards and often encouraged unsustainable practices at different levels. Ecological and social changes, ranging from ecosystem changes to transformations of human practices and interactions, dramatically challenge the view that changes which we experience, and will be experiencing in the future, are incremental, predictable and, therefore, to a large degree, controllable. Global environmental and social systems are being affected, often unpredictably, by the way in which we manage resources and govern ecosystem services. It is time to critically examine the kinds of competencies which have been promoted by the HEIs over decades, the type of its engagement with society and its role as a knowledge creating, technology transferring and policy influencing institution.

Zygmunt Bauman (2007) characterises the present condition of the world as “liquid modernity”, as contrasted with “solid modernity”:

“...social forms (structures that limit individual choices, institutions that guard repetitions of routines, patterns of acceptable behavior) can no longer (and are not expected) to keep their shape for long, because they decompose and melt faster than the time it takes to cast them, and once they are cast for them to set. Forms, whether already present or only adumbrated, are unlikely to be given enough time to

solidify, and cannot serve as frames of reference for human actions and long-term strategies because of their short life expectation: indeed, a life expectation shorter than the time it takes to develop a cohesive and consistent strategy, and still shorter than the fulfillment of an individual ‘life project’ requires.”

According to Bauman, the transition from “solid” to “liquid” modernity has challenged individuals to find alternative ways to organise their lives, for social forms no longer have enough time to solidify and cannot serve as frames of reference for human actions. In “liquid modernity”, the kinds of competencies traditionally promoted by HEIs (and the entire education system) may, indeed, become (or have become) obsolete. For example, a customary emphasis on a particular set of skills and the use of these skills in preset circumstances with little variability could make the provision of education costly and its results short-lived. It would be fair to state that working with more ambitious educational goals preparing students to build a society resilient to economic, environmental and social shocks and to anticipate and envision different futures is a challenging undertaking. University faculty faces a large number of barriers, including often rigid requirement of evaluating students’ performance in a particular way, limited possibilities of advancing one’s academic career within the unconventional field of sustainability, and lack of faculty capacity to undertake transdisciplinary teaching and research, to mention just a few. While there are notable sustainable development (SD) and education for sustainable development (ESD) innovations by some disciplines, e.g. engineering, architecture, computer science, the HEI as an institution today faces significant challenges in cultivating the abilities of future generations of decision makers and professionals to live in “liquid modernity”.

Moreover, the role of knowledge becomes very different in “reflexive modernization”. Ulrich Beck (2009) points out that “[the] more dominant ‘reflexive appropriation of knowledge’ becomes in the interaction between the institutional dimensions, the more uncontrollable become the global interactions in a world that is increasingly merging into a single planetary unit”. In a situation of instability and fragility of knowledge, the importance of “non-knowing”—reflected non-knowing, conscious or unknown inability to know (Beck 2009)—calls for the reconceptualisation of “objective” knowledge and challenges the linear knowledge theories traditionally represented by specialised experts. The changing landscape for knowledge creation provides an unprecedented and unparalleled setting for knowledge-related institutions—including HEIs—and puts forward challenging questions to HEIs: How can HEIs equip future generations of professionals with competencies required for sustainability, and exactly

what do we mean by these competencies? What should be HEIs' relations with the society, as their beneficiary as well as holders of diverse (and potentially conflicting) forms of (non)knowledge? What is the HEI for in our world of new complexity and dynamism?

While sociologists contemplating the changing nature of the world provide HEIs with a series of challenging questions, HEIs themselves are also beginning to question the ways in which they have traditionally operated. Some question the role of universities in service to the industrial mass-producing society with a massive intake of students that are to take functional places on the producing and consuming conveyor. As the world economy grew at a fast rate, the valued role of universities and industries in (narrowly defined) 'development' (as economic growth) has placed much emphasis on universities' contribution to the economy, particularly in the national context (Parker 2008). Whereas there are concerns about the 'service university' which compromises academic freedom and institutional autonomy under intensifying market forces on the one hand (Tjeldvoll and Blažėnaitė 2007), there are calls for HEIs to respond more strongly to societal needs and demands on the other. As our understanding of 'development' has broadened to include 'human development' and 'sustainable development', there are more and more calls for expanding the meaning of the so-called 'third-mission' of the university in addition to its core missions of education and research. The 'third mission' no longer means merely 'outreach' to society but deeper engagement with and relevance to society. Recent analysis demonstrates that, in spite of the call for problem-solving actions in economic and social arenas, HEIs "have been very poor at taking into account and focusing on the needs by collective actors (cities, NGOs speaking of 'orphan' problems...) and on social and cultural problems"<sup>1</sup> (Laredo 2007).

Many universities are searching for a new model where social, environmental and economic interests of the local and wider communities would be at the core of the HEI. Such searching for a new model, as pointed out by the member institution of ProSPER.Net Universiti Sains Malaysia (Sanusi et al. 2008), should go beyond modifying the curriculum or embarking on research to address sustainability issues. What may be required is to comprehensively address sustainable development as a new way of

running HEIs, with radical restructuring of the administrative and academic functions, including "the changing of paradigm from industry-market driven research and learning process to the one that is backboneed by sustainability" (Sanusi et al. 2008).

These calls for fundamental rethinking of the role of higher education resonate with the ongoing discussion of competencies and capabilities for SD and ESD. Our selection of thematic contents of SD and ESD, the way we organise the learning activity and the way we evaluate students' learning should all be closely aligned to the intended learning outcomes, which can also be described as competencies. Designing educational contents and methods cannot be adequately done without first defining which learning goals are to be aimed at and which competencies the learner should acquire. UNESCO has provided descriptors for ESD in connection with the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), but these describe the characteristics of the educational offering (inputs) rather than outcomes for students (outputs). Neither the often-quoted vision of DESD ("a world where everybody has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behaviours and lifestyles required for positive societal transformation") nor the "essential characteristics" of ESD listed in the DESD International Implementation Scheme (UNESCO 2005) have been very helpful in designing educational programmes conducive for transformative learning.

As Sleurs (2008) puts it succinctly, the competence approach asks "not what should be taught, but what should be learned, what abilities for acting, which concepts and problem-solving strategies people should have acquired as a result of the learning process" (p. 40). The competence approach is gaining momentum in the fields of education for sustainability and ESD. For example, the U.S. congress passed in 2008 the Higher Education Sustainability Act (\$50 million) and there are increasing calls to define what this means exactly—what sorts of content, pedagogical, education theory revisions are necessary in higher education. In 2009, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Steering Committee on ESD formed an expert group on the competencies of educators. The OECD also talks about "core competencies for ESD" (OECD 2008; Stevens 2008). Some of the most powerful countries and regions in the world are starting to ask what kinds of competencies are needed for transition to sustainability.

Among ongoing development of many educational initiatives for sustainable development at the higher education level, there is a notable example of the International Commission on Education for Sustainable Development Practice (2008), funded by the MacArthur Foundation. The MacArthur Foundation is committed to providing US \$15

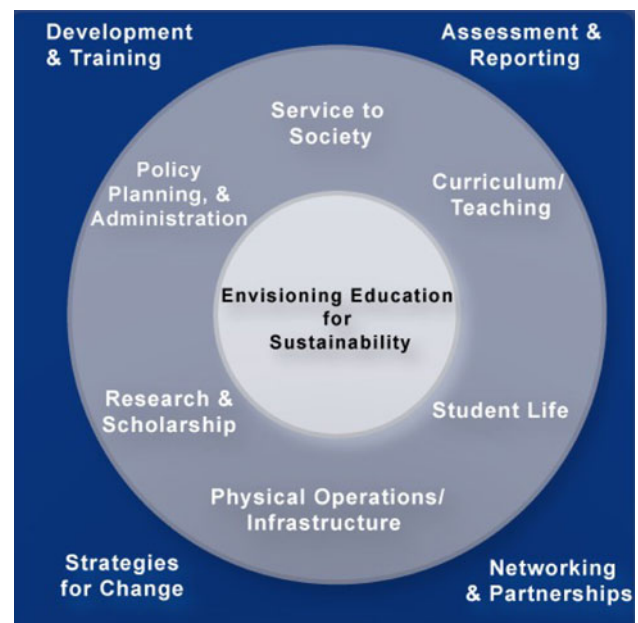
<sup>1</sup> Discussion of expanding the 'third mission' of HEIs benefits from looking into challenges the private sector is facing in its efforts to engage with broader society. Corporations cannot deal with issues of poverty, environment and social challenges unrelated to the very core of their business. Promoters of the Great Transition Initiative (Raskin 2006) pointed out that "a moment of paradox and opportunity has arrived. How can corporations be designed so as to blend social, environmental, and financial mission at their very core? This is the design challenge of the 21st century."

million to provide seed support to help a global network of universities initiate new Master of Development Practice (MDP) programmes along the model set forth in the Commission's report. The Commission's members included internationally renowned scholars on sustainable development such as Jeffrey Sachs and R. K. Pachauri as well as the heads of key development organisations. While providing a strong impetus for HEIs around the globe to create a new degree programme designed to produce graduates with new competencies for “sustainable development practice”, the MDP model can be criticised on the grounds that it pays insufficient attention to the ‘social action’ competence (as opposed to individual competencies), critical reflection, complexity and inter-/trans-disciplinarity (taken as beyond exposure of learners to a variety of disciplines—in the MDP model, health sciences, natural sciences, social sciences and management). Recognition of the existence of multiple ways of knowing governs thinking and actions within the ‘social learning’ framework (Wals 2007), and this position also puts a series of challenging questions towards the kinds of core competencies to be formed within (or with the participation of) HEIs.

### Calls for alternative university appraisal

A quest for a new HEI involves many changes, both internally and externally. The Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP) Resource Project that was actively run between 2003 and 2007 defined eleven areas where HEIs should work in a move towards just, equitable and environmentally sound society. Among the areas identified in a series of regional consultations with university leaders and interested stakeholders were those related to envisioning education for sustainability, strategies for change, networking and partnerships, as well as areas of research, curriculum and teaching, physical operation and student life (see Fig. 1). While changes in these areas can be controlled or significantly influenced by the HEI directly, many of them are influenced, often critically, by non-university stakeholders. For example, governments, professional associations, private sector and local community can create both constraints and opportunities for higher education reforms. Here, we would like to focus on one issue that seriously governs the activities of the HEI, as well as related policy-making practices—higher education rankings and assessments.

For a long time, different regions have been concerned with the limited character of higher education ranking. This unhappiness is being accelerated in the face of global challenges. Jan Figel, the European Commissioner on Education, Training, Culture and Youth called the existing ranking systems “mono-dimensional”, emphasising that “we are



**Fig. 1** Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP) Resource Project: areas of higher education institution (HEI) work

more interested in developing a ranking system that goes beyond the research performance of the universities, to include elements such as teaching quality and community outreach” (IREG 2008). In search of a system that would provide a better account of diversity in European universities, the European Commission awarded a contract to design such a system to the Consortium of Higher Education and Research Performance Assessment (CHERPA). This project attempts to go beyond the limitations of major ranking systems that disregard strong sides of European universities to cover various types of HEIs within and outside Europe. CHERPA will develop and test a set of indicators according to the type and size of the HEIs. The proposed ranking would use a grouping approach instead of league tables.

A growing discontent with mainstream HEI ranking is manifested in the United States as well. For example, many college presidents feel pressed into participation in the college ranking systems—“hugely influential beauty contests” (Rawe 2007). They criticise the U.S. News & World Report’s annual ranking for overemphasising not the results of the direct work of HEIs—e.g. results of the in-class activities—but activities (and spending) directed on marketing and promotions (Rawe 2007). A growing number of HEIs are consolidating their efforts for finding a viable, yet, very challenging alternative, for example, by focusing on how challenging the curriculum is for the students.

In Asia, one of the drivers for creating an alternative ranking is the unsatisfactory positions that the Asian HEIs, in general, occupy in these world ranking systems.

In addition, coupled with an understanding of challenges of the times ahead, the principles of ESD (e.g. the idea that education must be culturally appropriate and locally relevant) also contribute to the ranking discourse. If there is an agreement that HEIs should respond to the requirement of strengthening the “Third Mission” and the quickly changing “liquid” world of which we are a constituent part, the universal ranking system is far from adequate. Sustainable development requires articulating a global vision in local terms. Universal priorities for ‘our common future’ would have to be translated into local visions, strategies and actions, and by the same token, forms of engagement and action on the part of HEIs aspiring to address sustainability would have to be different, depending on the local contexts. Finally, if HEIs are to genuinely take into account the needs of their regions and to respond to the changing world, the assessment and ranking system of today might not only limit the benefit of the HEI to the society, but would make their existence endangered tomorrow.

Influential university rankings, such as those compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University’s Institute of Higher Education<sup>2</sup> and QS.com<sup>3</sup>, are outcome-based assessments for comparing HEIs according to predetermined benchmarks/criteria/indicators. Mainstream university ranking is based on conventional university functions corresponding to the modernist definition of ‘development’, which require revisions if universities are to remain relevant in humanity’s quest for addressing the compound challenge of sustainable development in the long run.

### **Project of ProSPER.Net: Alternative University Appraisal Model based on ESD—first steps**

In order to support universities in the Asia–Pacific region that plan to introduce or to strengthen their sustainability activities, the Alternative University Appraisal (AUA) project was launched in June 2009 as a collaborative undertaking of ProSPER.Net members. ProSPER.Net is an Asia–Pacific academic alliance for ESD under the auspices of the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS), and the network, at the beginning of 2010, consists of nineteen member institutions that are leading universities in the region. The member universities jointly undertake a variety of projects ranging from capacity development for the policy makers to poverty and ESD. Currently, Hokkaido University acts as the secretariat of the AUA project funded by the International Cooperation Initiative of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,

Science and Technology, Japan (MEXT)<sup>4</sup>. The AUA project is carried out in close collaboration with AIT (Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand), TERI University (India), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Yonsei University (Korea) and UNU-IAS.

The AUA model is being developed based on: (1) the vision of a new university that contributes to sustainable development and (2) the results of the review of existing university ranking and rating systems. The AUA team started reviewing the existing work, such as the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS)<sup>5</sup>, Berlin Principles on Ranking of Higher Education Institutions<sup>6</sup> and a report critically examining the current assessment systems of HEIs in England (CHERI, Open University, and Hobsons Research, 2008).

The AUA model will provide resources for HEIs to review and critically reflect upon their own practices in their major areas of activity (including the three major functions of education, research and outreach) from the perspective of ESD. The AUA model will indicate points to consider in HEIs’ efforts to reorient themselves towards a sustainable future and help them identify the areas that need to be addressed and improved. In other words, the AUA model serves the purpose of “guidelines” and “signposts” that help a university learn what is required in order to evolve into a university that promotes ESD initiatives in a practical manner. In utilising the AUA model, a university may well leave certain established “business as usual” behind, while at the same time drawing on some of its routine practices. The AUA model is not meant to impose universal predetermined options to HEIs but to provide them with resources to configure, through discussion and critical reflection, their own combination of practices conducive to transformative learning.

The AUA project is one of the first steps for creating a valuable alternative to the existing ranking and assessment systems of HEIs. Several months of intensive discussions

<sup>4</sup> MEXT’s International Cooperation Initiative aims at formulating practical international cooperation models in ESD through inter-university collaboration involving Japanese universities and universities in developing countries in Asia and/or Africa. A proposal must be prepared and submitted by a Japanese university to MEXT, so the proposal was submitted by Hokkaido University. JPY 5,000,000 was allocated to the AUA project for the fiscal year 2009–2010 (ending in March 2010).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.aashe.org>.

<sup>6</sup> The Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington and the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) in Bucharest founded the International Ranking Expert Group (IREG) in 2004. In 2006, the group developed a set of principles of quality and good practice for higher education rankings—referred to as the Berlin Principles on Ranking of Higher Education Institutions.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.arwu.org>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/>.

among the project partners and consultations with the key stakeholders in the higher education, business and public authorities brought forward an array of challenging issues that would form an ambitious research and action programme calling for the contributions of many partners. It became clear, for example, that the potential of originally envisioned self-assessment as a main strategy of AUA might be limited. Many HEIs, wishing to be recognised by their stakeholders, would appreciate a system of benchmarking that gives credit to their efforts in the areas of SD and ESD. Other questions calling for resolution are those related to the acceptance of a new scheme by the universities and their stakeholders and to the circumstances that would enable the choice between the traditional and a new scheme (or acceptance of both). There is a firming understanding among some of the AUA partners that, with often unclear conceptual boundaries between ESD and good education for the future (as well as between SD research and meaningful societal research), it might be reasonable to bring the AUA project closer to the core of the HEI business instead of portraying it as a “project for sustainability”. It would require closer engagement with the mainstream assessment and ranking systems.

### Challenges, synergies and ways ahead

The daunting task of developing AUA calls for a much broader programme with the engagement of various stakeholders. Consultations with the private sector (as a partner in the private–public innovation system), governments (as a funding and regulating agency) and civil society organisations (as representatives of local and broader communities) will be necessary. HEIs do not exist in a vacuum and such consultations are a critical extension of the dialogue that will be facilitated by the AUA project and is already ongoing within the HEI community (e.g. regional consultations of the GHESP Resource Project). Consultations would also be necessary with the established university assessment and accreditation bodies. This particular group of stakeholders would be critical for understanding possible mechanisms for integrating sustainability issues into existing university assessment and accreditation systems. Not only would such consultations permit the AUA project to link with the dominant forces shaping the development of HEIs today, but they would also assist it in delivering quality outcomes for a better tomorrow.

Whilst discussions of the new role(s) of HEIs and the ways to appraise them will pay attention to the actions in the current situation, this will hardly be enough. The challenge is also to anticipate unfolding evident and hidden interactions of political, scientific, technological, social and

economic developments and their impacts on the natural environment. There is a need to chart potential futures with their uncertainties, both good and bad. Scenarios that examine critical factors and forces shaping the future might be very promising for HEIs expecting the outcomes of their work to have longer term implications in the future. Students spend a number of years before they begin to apply their knowledge and skills full time in the work setting, research might take many years to yield results and, as mentioned before, taking into account the consequences of knowledge application would call for more thinking about uncertainties (non-knowing). Scenarios are not forecasts of one future (which is impossible in the face of complex questions and longer time frames), but multiple plausible settings of the future world. The consideration of futures is particularly interesting for the discussion of the expert cultures that still dominate university practices in research and education. Futures, with all of the uncertainties and unknowns, call for more experimental and systemic ways for knowing and, thus, seriously challenge the position of experts and disciplines that often block such necessary holistic approaches.

Both actions—consultations with stakeholders outside of the HEI and creating the map of future uncertainties for it—are full of serious challenges with regards to knowledge accessibility and legitimacy. Serious analysis of these challenges deserves a separate publication. Here, we will mention just a few of the immediate concerns. Questioning of the status quo of the institutions requires engagement with those that have a deep understanding of the institutional position of various sectors. Deciding whom to consult, given time and resource constraints, becomes a challenge. There is no doubt that the Asia–Pacific region has individuals with profound insights into businesses, academia, etc. and the new role(s) for HEIs in the region and beyond. However, access to these people might not be guaranteed for various reasons, including our lack of proficiency in their languages, our limited expertise in certain fields and their (non-)engagement with political processes directed at the institutional change.

In spite of all the challenges, there are processes that could facilitate the AUA initiative. In 2005, the United Nations launched the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), aiming at the integration of the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. As the DESD reached its mid-point in 2009, the evaluation of its results was one of the major topics discussed at the *UNESCO World Conference on ESD: Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade* (31 March to 2 April, 2009, Bonn, Germany). The DESD Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) process is guided by the Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (GMEF) that comprises five mutually supportive

components—questionnaire, complementary research, multi-stakeholder consultation process (MSCP), UNESCO's self-evaluation portfolio and longitudinal assessments.

The World Conference on ESD and the Bonn Declaration stressed the importance of partnerships for learning for sustainability. HEIs in North–South–South<sup>7</sup> and South–South<sup>8</sup> partnerships and networks were singled out as significant partners for sustainable development. In the second half of the UN Decade, it is, therefore, envisioned that the GMEF will include an assessment of the processes and learning from such broad-based networks and partnerships involving HEIs. The Monitoring & Evaluation Expert Group (MEEG) (appointed by UNESCO in 2007 to advise and support UNESCO on appropriate DESD M & E mechanisms) is currently working on Phase II (2009–2011) of the GMEF<sup>9</sup>. Members of the MEEG consider that the outcomes of the AUA project are worth linking to Phase II, proposing to include it in the MSCP component of the GMEF (pending the official decision of the DESD Secretariat at UNESCO).

By combining different processes driven by different players and diverse challenges, the AUA project aims at becoming a process of mobilising HEIs towards a broader impact on society. Different groups have differing reasons to seek an alternative university appraisal system, but few will oppose the idea that there is a need for an alternative system that embraces diversity, encourages innovation and facilitates change towards a better future—for all. Although there is much normative talk about ESD and sustainability education as transdisciplinary and participatory, there is no denying that advocates and practitioners of SD, ESD, sustainability science, sustainability education and the like are still concentrated in certain disciplinary fields. ProSPER.Net is not simply a network for sharing information and “good practices”, but a “community of practice” that experiments—and struggles—with building

meaningful academic partnerships across geographic and knowledge boundaries (albeit limited in the Asia–Pacific context) required for global transition to sustainability. If we are serious about what we claim to be doing, significant efforts need to be made to engage those who are already “doing sustainability”, as well as those powerful actors who are not explicitly labelling themselves as doing it. Positioning the AUA project within the DESD GMEF is but one attempt to influence educational policy. Coupled with engagement with policy-making processes through information provision, capacity development, research on and for relevant policies, strategic partnerships with policy makers and powerful educational and scientific consortia could assist in developing an understanding of a viable alternative to the existing higher education ranking systems. As a collaborative project of ProSPER.Net, which is facilitated by UNU-IAS, the AUA project can potentially derive the necessary legitimacy and impetus to promote university appraisal for sustainable development from the UNU's mission to function as “a bridge between the United Nations and the international academic community”.

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<sup>7</sup> A North–South–South partnership or triangular partnership is a relatively new form of partnership where Southern partners wishing to cooperate invite a Northern partner to maximise financial, technical or logistical resources of cooperation.

<sup>8</sup> A South–South partnership broadly refers to the collaboration among developing countries in order to secure self-sufficiency among (more and less developed) economically developing nations.

<sup>9</sup> The DESD Monitoring & Evaluation process at the global level comprises three phases:

- Phase I: 2007–2009, focusing on contexts and structures of work on ESD;
- Phase II: 2009–2011, focusing on processes and learning initiatives related to ESD;
- Phase III: 2011–2014, focusing on impacts and outcomes of the DESD.

A series of three reports corresponding to the focus of the DESD M & E phases will be developed and published by UNESCO in 2009, 2011 and 2014, respectively.

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