Declaration on the Knowledge Equity Network

Our planet faces unprecedented challenges including climate change, economic instability, inequality, poverty, and forced population displacements that threaten the health and wellbeing of the population. Higher Education is at the forefront of addressing these profound problems. To do so effectively, we must continue to develop an open, collaborative approach, working as a global community, and reaffirm the core purpose of Higher Education; to improve the world for the benefit of all.

Meaningful global partnerships with fair and open access to quality education for all will help reduce inequalities across the world. Open collaboration and dissemination in research will lead to new ideas and discoveries and help us resolve challenges such as climate change, poverty, sustainable energy production, the maintenance and enhancement of ethical governance and human rights, and a high quality of life in general.

We will reconfirm the important roles Higher Education fulfils in society, and drive toward the open, collaborative culture and environment that will be required to make a meaningful difference to this world.

The Knowledge Equity Network will create a shared community of learners, practitioners, and innovators to unlock open and equitable access to knowledge. We believe that through the power of knowledge we will be able to reduce inequalities, and that collective creativity is crucial to generate the leadership and solutions to tackle global challenges.
Our principles are:

**Universal:** The Higher Education System is for the good of all, training the workforce and leaders of tomorrow, enriching cultures, improving health and wellbeing, and driving innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Collaborative:** the need to prioritise collaboration over competition.

**Inclusive:** the need to consider all potential beneficiaries of higher education, and the knowledge it creates, creating practices that provide equal and fair access to all, leading to equitable outcomes.

**Sustainable:** the need to carry out these practices in a way that is sustainable for providers, funders, and participants.

We recognise that many institutions, funding agencies, publishers, and academics are already encouraging improved practices to support different aspects of opening Higher Education. Our aim is to share and build upon these practices, developing a global approach for the benefit of all. Working with signatories, we will deliver a step change in global approaches to Higher Education, including (but not limited to):

- adoption of good governance principles (e.g., cohesion, openness, participation, effectiveness, and accountability);
- a cohesive approach to improve equality, diversity and inclusion;
- a move away from competition-focussed rankings;
- an increase in collaborative efforts to address UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- a wholehearted commitment to open publication;
- a significant increase in co-design and co-delivery of research and student education between the Global North and Global South; and
- student demographics that reflect our populations.

The signatories of the Declaration on the Knowledge Equity Network support the adoption of the following practices.
General Recommendations

1. The Higher Education system must create a culture and environment where there is open and equitable access to both education and the benefits of knowledge and innovation that result from Higher Education.

2. The Higher Education system must actively address inequalities (social, geographical, financial etc.) that prevent or limit open access to Higher Education.

3. The Higher Education system must move away from a competition-based environment to a global collaborative endeavour where partnership is celebrated and rewarded.

For Higher Education Institutions

1. Publish a Knowledge Equity statement for your institution by 2025, incorporating tangible commitments aligned with the principles and objectives below.

2. Commit to institutional action(s) to support the global goal of at least 75% of published educational material being offered freely and openly for educators, students, and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning, and research by 2030.

3. Commit to institutional action(s) to support the global goal of at least 90% of new research outputs being transparent and freely accessible to all by 2030.

4. Be explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, rewarding, and recognising open practices across both research and education. This should include the importance of interdisciplinary and/or collaborative activities, and the contribution of all individuals to activities.

5. Define EDI targets that will contribute towards open and inclusive Higher Education practices, and report annually on progress against these targets.

6. To create new mechanisms in and between Higher Education Institutions that allow for further widening participation and increased diversity of staff and student populations.

7. Review the support infrastructure for open higher education, and invest in the human, technical, and digital infrastructure that is needed to make open higher education a success.

8. Insist on open interoperability principles for any research or education software/system that you procure or develop, explicitly highlighting the option of making all or parts of content open for public consumption.

9. Ensure that all research data conforms to the FAIR Data Principles: ‘findable’, accessible, interoperable, and re-useable.
For Funding Agencies

1. Publish a statement that open dissemination of research findings is a critical component in evaluating the productivity and integrity of research.
2. Incorporate open research practices into assessment of funding proposals.
3. Incentivise the adoption of Open Research through policies, frameworks and mandates that require open access for publications, data, and other outputs, with as liberal of a license as possible for maximum reuse.
4. Actively manage funding schemes to support open infrastructures and open dissemination of research findings, educational resources, and underpinning data.
5. Explicitly define reward and recognition mechanisms for globally co-produced and co-delivered open educational resources that benefit society.

For Publishers and Suppliers

1. Ensure the availability of fair and reasonable routes by which research findings can be rapidly published in an open format.
2. Ensure that open educational resources can be freely shared through open licences which facilitate use, revision, translation, improvement and sharing by anyone.
3. Whenever possible, resources should be published in formats that facilitate both use and editing, and that accommodate a diversity of technical platforms.
4. Whenever possible, open resources should also be available in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities and people without access to the Internet.
5. Actively include and highlight open resources within resource repositories.
6. Conceive digital platforms with sharing and open APIs as a design principle.

For Individuals

1. Champion the benefits of open higher education at peer, institutional, sectoral, and cultural levels.
2. When involved in committees making decisions about funding, hiring, tenure, or promotion, ensure that due consideration is given for the contribution toward open higher education.
3. Ensure that all research outputs are deposited in an open access repository, improving access to and impact of research findings.
4. Ensure that all research data conforms to the FAIR Data Principles: ‘findable’, accessible, interoperable, and re-useable.
5. Embrace educational practices built around collaboration, discovery, and the creation of knowledge; and inviting peers and colleagues to get involved.