Una Europa – Africa Partnership: Vision Statement and Roadmap

What?

Since May 2022, Una Europa members and African partner universities have met to co-create a shared vision for a pilot partnership. Built on existing bilateral links, the partnership's work has been purposeful in its focus on the value of multilateral partnerships in developing equal partnerships in an unequal world (or mutually beneficial partnerships to address global challenges). The partnership decided to focus its work on tangible actions that will lead to the creation of a vibrant international community of researchers, by supporting the growth and development of early career researchers, with a specific focus on addressing global challenges. We believe this is where a multilateral partnership of this kind can have most impact.

Why?

Universities of the future must put front and centre their commitment to supporting and developing the next generation as globally-connected co-creators of the future we want. **Only through strategic collaboration across research, innovation, education and outreach, and community building can this be achieved**. A partnership of institutions from across the continents of Africa and Europe provides an opportunity to share expertise from across diverse contexts, ensuring students and staff are future-ready in a rapidly changing world.

How?

The partnership has embraced an open and collaborative approach to designing a vision statement and roadmap. Both are designed to be agile, and will allow for prioritisation, evolution, and potential growth of the proposed activities. Partner universities have met in Helsinki in June 2022 and again in October 2022 for two co-creation workshops. The session in October included a small number of new partners who had not been present in Helsinki. The outcomes of those meetings have shaped the vision statement and roadmap.

Who?

Universities currently taking part in this co-creative process are:

- University of Edinburgh (Chair)
- University of Bologna
- University College Dublin
- Eduardo Mondlane University
- University of Ghana
- University of Helsinki
- Jagiellonian University

- University of Johannesburg
- Kampala International University
- Leiden University
- KU Leuven
- Makerere University
- University of Nairobi
- University of the Witwatersrand

Una Europa-Africa Vision Statement

"Whatever we do, we do it for the next generation"

Our universities of the future must ensure our graduates are future-ready in an increasingly interconnected world. The partnership will leverage the strengths of its component parts and should be ambitious in its offer to the future of education, research, and community development.

Strategic collaboration across research, innovation, education, and outreach & community building

We must build a more sustainable future together, building on existing partnership in line with Sustainable Development Goal 17, and funding support. Mainstream African knowledge and perspectives and provide joint mobility opportunities to learn and engage. Create systematic opportunities, including new ways to engage African and European researchers.

Early career focus

The partnership's primary commitment will be to support early career researchers, the future of the academy.

Vision

To build a vibrant community of researchers across Europe and Africa to address global challenges.

Mission

Global challenges know no borders. Universities must collaborate to address inequities and find joint solutions for the benefit of all.

Knowledge production must be proactively widened and made more inclusive and African and European scholars must both be members of a global research and education community.

Partnership Values

Excellence Principles

- Equity
- Diversity
- Openness
- Long-term commitment
- Trust and transparency
- Complementary strength
- Positive and proactive

- Ambition
- Co-creatior
- Innovation
- Quality
- Impact
- Reflective

Una Europa-Africa Draft Roadmap

This is a proposed roadmap, including activities for which there is a shared interest, and would assist the partnership towards its shared vision. They are not intended to be sequential but rather form part of a collaboration that grows organically. Proposed actions are largely drawn from the ideas put forward by participants at the online session, held in October 2022. A further exercise will be necessary to determine which of these activities should be prioritised and carried forward by the partnership, in line with a shared vision.

Activities are broken down into for phases: Scoping - Connecting - Supporting - Skilling.

Scoping: We acknowledge there is still work to be undertaken to identify strengths and opportunities within the partnership. The vision statement and roadmap are purposefully agile to respond to the development and growth of ideas.

Connecting: A core component of supporting early career researchers in through connection. Extensive mapping of partner institutions as well as facilitated networking opportunities will support the partnership to connect.

Supporting: Connections require support. Sustained commitments to growing connections across the multilateral partnership can be provided through various opportunities.

Skilling: Connected and supported groups of early career researchers can be skilled through specifically designed programmes and/or through peer networks.

Circular and continuous evaluation and reflection of these stages will be important as the partnership activities progress.

PHASE ONE scoping

Regular virtual planning and communication meetings, and an African-hosted convening:

An open and collaborative approach to partnership and opportunity to launch the vision statement and roadmap. Mapping of research themes and groups centres, groups, and institutes across the Africa-Europe partnership:

To identify prospects for collaboration and to support building of links between institutions and individuals.

Agreement on vision statement and road map as a living document:

To provide a coherent vision for all partners to commit, while leaving scope to review and reflect.

PHASE TWO CONNECTING

Encouraging links: To build on prospects and explore further the potential for collaboration, while identifying funding opportunities to support.

PhD Masterclasses: Online learning and networking opportunity for PhD students across all partners.

Connecting programme: A peer-connection programme for ECRs at complementary levels of work/career progression.

PHASE THREE SUPPORTING

Seed funding: Small, pump-priming opportunities to support proven connections, across the partnership.

Una Europa-Africa Fellowship programme: Longer-term mobility opportunities for proven connections across the partnership, in specific areas of research.

Student Challenges and/or 'summer' schools: Intensive mobility opportunities, or online, for ECRs working on real time projects, or using projectbased/competition learning.

PHASE FOUR SKILLING

Training of PhD supervisors: To skill up supervisors to better support PhD students, across the partnership.

Academic skills development for PhDs:

A suite of training modules, perhaps accredited, to support skill development and stronger academic output e.g. writing workshops.

Formal qualification developed in innovation: To provide ECRs with an opportunity to build entrepreneurial and innovation skills, to commercialise research, and contribute to job creation.

Build an understanding of	Joint PhD Supervision:	Large-scale funding support:	Career progression
current projects that support	Finding a multi-lateral	To support one or two key	opportunities:
ECRs:	approach to shared	ECR connections within the	To utilise the network of
To guide the partnership on	supervision, to benefit the	Africa-Europe partnership.	ECRs across the partnership
best practice and create space	partnership's vision.		to provide career progression
for consultation with ECRs.			prospects.
Mapping of complementary			
strengths in the six			
interdisciplinary Una Europa			
Focus Areas			
Artificial Intelligence & Data			
Science			
Sustainability			
Cultural Heritage			
One Health			
Europe and the World			
Future Materials			