



# WAHEN

## **The World Access to Higher Education Network (WAHEN)**

WAHEN is the professional, global organisation established to support equitable access and success in higher education.

# Why is equitable access & success important?



- In ALL of countries in the world where we have evidence, over 90%, inequalities in participation in higher education (HE) by social background exist.
- Across 76 of the lowest income countries the poorest people are 20 times less likely to complete a higher education course than the richest.
- Although equity is a priority in the higher education agenda of governments across the world, only a minority have specific participation targets for any equity group.
- The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.3 states  
**"By 2030 ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university."**

## What is equitable access and success?

Access to higher education refers to participation by students from all backgrounds. Equitable access refers to participation by students who are either in the minority in a particular country or come from a 'disadvantaged majority' who on average earn less/ experience greater social/economic challenges than a minority population. The nature of the specific minorities or disadvantaged majority is defined by the social, economic, and political context of a particular country. These groups are usually (although not exclusively) drawn from one of more of the following categories:

- A low income/socio-economic group
- Ethnic and religious minority backgrounds
- Female students
- Students with disabilities
- Students belong to sexual or gender minorities
- Older students, or those from rural backgrounds.

It is crucial that we make more concerted efforts to make access, and success, more equitable. Not only will this help individuals to improve their own chances of being successful, but it will benefit society as a whole. To reach this goal, new innovations in thinking and practice are necessary, and the engagement of new stakeholders from within and outside HE.

WAHEN will be the global network dedicated to equitable access and success in higher education.



# What is WAHEN?

## The World Access to Higher Education Network (WAHEN)

WAHEN is the professional, global organisation established to support equitable access and success in higher education. It has been convened by the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON), who are based at the University of West London in the United Kingdom. WAHEN is not funded, or subsidised, by any government, University, or other benefactor. WAHEN will only be sustainable if it is supported by membership subscription and income from events, activities, and projects.

### The WAHEN Mission

To make access and success in higher education available to all.

### The WAHEN Vision

A world where, in every country, more people from minority or from disadvantaged majority populations are able to benefit from participation in higher education.

### WAHEN will have five strategic priorities:

- **Capacity Building** - To facilitate equity in higher education through the sharing, professionalisation and enhancement of practice related to higher education equity.
- **Collaboration** – To enable and lead new shared partnerships between organisations working together, on a global basis, to achieve shared goals around equity in higher education.
- **Convening** – To bring together those from across countries and sectors to affect change higher education equity.
- **Campaigning** – To advocate to and work with policymakers and governments around the world to make higher education more equitable.
- **Critical thinking** – To create a space where research and scholarly activity related to higher education access, equity and success globally can be produced.



# World Access to Higher Education Day

**WAHEN builds on the work over the last five years of World Access to Higher Education Day (WAHED) – the international day of action, which acts as a catalyst to address inequalities in higher education access and success. WAHED is the only established global initiative tackling issues of inequity in access and student success in higher education. Since 2018:**

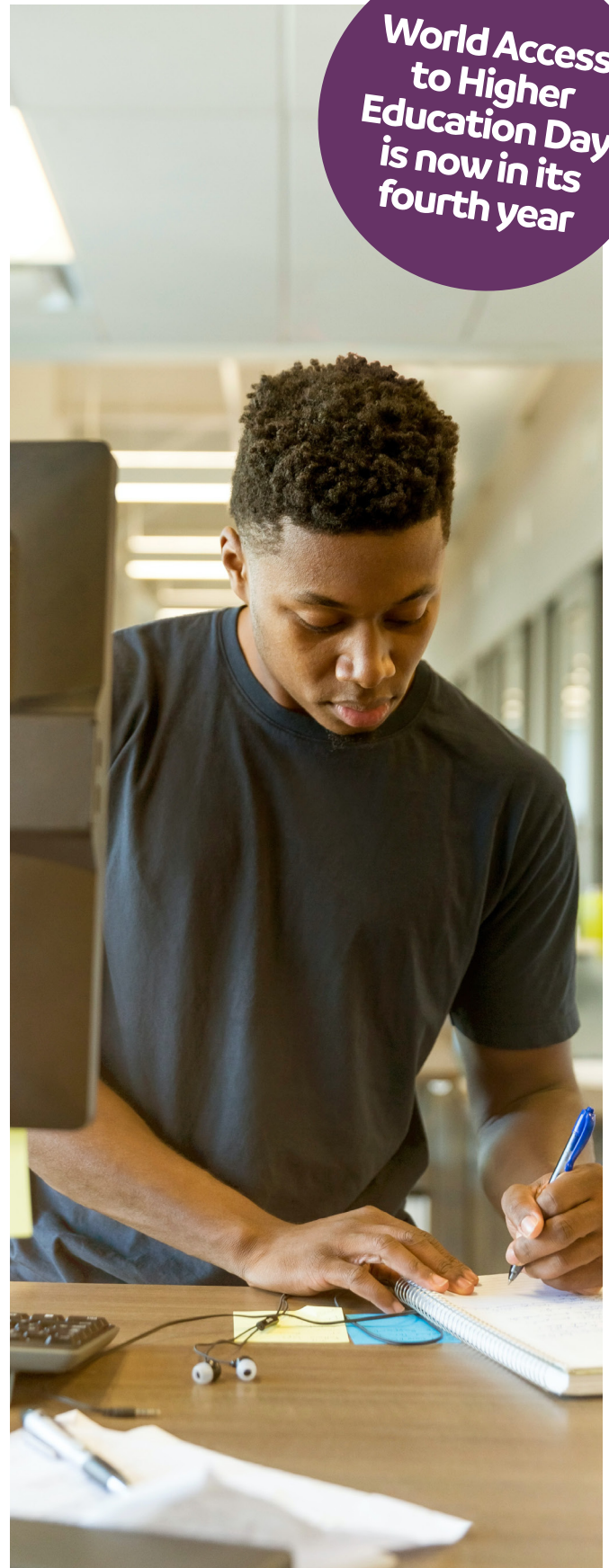
- Partners, and supporters have held nearly 200 separate events to celebrate and promote fair access to, and success within higher education;
- Over 1000 organisations including over 700 universities have engaged with WAHED;
- Organisations from over 100 countries have participated in WAHED activities;
- Over 1,100 registered delegates participated in our 2021 online conference with speakers including representatives from five governments, the World Bank, International Association of Universities and the Association of Commonwealth Universities;
- Produced three major research reports and the Global Equity Policy Map which is the authoritative source of information on equity policies in the world with data on over 110 countries.

From 2022 WAHED will become part of WAHEN and participation in WAHED will be focused on WAHEN members.

World Access to Higher Education Day's key partners include:

- Asia-Europe Foundation
- Association of Commonwealth Universities
- Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA)
- International Association of Universities
- Lumina Foundation, USA
- NCUK – The University Consortium
- Observatory Magna Charta Universitatum
- The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC)
- University World News
- World Bank

**World Access  
to Higher  
Education Day  
is now in its  
fourth year**





## What will WAHEN do?

- **Professional development** – WAHEN will offer online, capacity building courses on a range of topics (at a reduced price for members). These courses will be led by experts in the field of equitable access and success and will focus on supporting members to enhance their skills, knowledge and capabilities. Topics will include courses on supporting disabled students to enter and succeed in HE; increasing completion rates for students from disadvantaged groups; building and inclusive curriculum and working with school to engage with learners from disadvantaged groups before they enter higher education. In 2023 we will be launching the first Global MBA in Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education delivered through Ruskin College Oxford.
- **WAHEN Action Forums** – Each Action Forum will consider a different area of practice that is vital in achieving equity in higher education and help to forge new collaborations between members. You can read more about the Action Forums on the next page.
- **World Access to Higher Education Day** – We will continue to host WAHED to ensure we keep access and equity at the top of the list of areas that need addressing for national governments, higher education institutions and society as a whole. Only members will be able to participate in WAHED for free from 2022.
- **Promoting equitable access and success** – WAHEN will work with its members to develop evidence-based campaigning work on all aspects of the global higher education equitable access and success agenda. WAHEN will work with other international organisations active in this field and build partnerships with those who share its vision. It will be an active presence in the global higher education policy landscape representing our members' views wherever we can. Members will also have the opportunity to participate in our new WAHEN Equitable Access and Success Awards.
- **WAHEN Research Group** – WAHEN will support a special group focused on research and scholarly activity related to equitable access and success in higher education. The research and evidence base where equity in higher education is concerned is a growing field encompassing academics and policy oriented researchers. However, opportunities for this work to be shared and the essential dialogue to occur that is at the heart of research need to be developed. This group will be a space where evolving research can be shared, thematic sessions curated, theory discussed and those all-important international research collaborations built. There will be opportunities for members to publish their work via our WAHEN report series.



## Our Action Forums

WAHEN action forums will be delivered online using our platform to bring together members to share knowledge, hear from experts and new researchers enabling deliver approaches in policy practice and the forging of new collaborations. The forums will be led by leading organisations in that particular equitable access and success field.

- **Building progression routes into higher education**

This forum will bring together those in universities from every continent who are working collaboratively with schools on attainment raising, mentoring and outreach. The group will also look at how admissions practices can be used to support equity and how financial support/scholarships can be used the most effectively.

- **Polymaking for higher education equity**

This forum will provide the place for the discussion of different policy approaches across the whole spectrum of the equity with different countries sharing practice and the evidence on policy effectiveness. It will build on the work that WAHED has done in constructing the Global Equity Policy Map which includes details on policies in this field in over 100 countries.

- **Maximising attainment and success – supporting student outcomes**

This forum will act as an innovation hub where those working at the leading edge of institutional change will share how they are building 21st century higher education experiences for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. This will include how data is being used to drive change; the theoretical underpinning of institutional practice; what diverse curriculum looks like and the role of academic practice as a driver of change.

- **Understanding equity: research, scholarship, and evidence**

This forum will be a space where evolving research can be shared, thematic sessions curated, theory discussed and those all-important international research collaborations built. The forum will also support the development of a WAHEN research agenda.

- **Opening up international higher education to all learners**

This forum will consider how we really open up international HE for those from all backgrounds? What innovative practices are universities, organisations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) undertaking? How can international higher education experience be accessible and affordable for all?





# Why become a part of WAHEN?

By joining WAHEN you are both demonstrating your organization's commitment to making higher education more equitable and gaining access to the support and networks that can enable your organization to better support learners from all backgrounds. You will be joining a world-wide community of organisations who share the same vision and believe that access to, and success in higher education, will bring about a fairer, more equal societies. WAHEN membership entitles all members of your organization to access the benefits below.

## Membership benefits

For a modest annual subscription all WAHEN members will be entitled to:

- FREE attendance at our online WAHEN Action Forums.
- FREE attendance for WAHEN's annual World Access to Higher Education Day conference.
- Reductions in the participation cost in the WAHEN Capacity Building programme.
- Opportunity to publish in our WAHEN report series.
- Guaranteed access to the new Ruskin College, Oxford MBA in Equitable Access and Success to be launched in 2023.
- WAHEN News – our free monthly newsletter highlighting key trends and issues in equitable access and success globally.
- Opportunity to promote conferences & seminars related to equitable access and success via WAHEN news and our online platform.
- Exclusive participation in the WAHEN's Global Equitable Access and Success Awards
- Opportunity to feature your own practice and work via our platform in the WAHEN Innovations series
- Eligibility to use the WAHEN logo on your own materials and platforms demonstrating your commitment to equitable access and success.
- Exclusive access to WAHEN research reports.
- Premium networking and collaboration opportunities through the WAHEN members platform where members can initiate conversations and partnerships with those across the world.

## Annual organizational subscription

<b>Low-Income Economies</b>	\$680 p.a.
<b>Lower-Middle-Income Economies</b>	\$750 p.a.
<b>Middle-Income Economies</b>	\$820 p.a.
<b>High-Income Economies</b>	\$890 p.a.

Income economies are classified by the World Bank <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>





**WAHEN is founded by the National Education Opportunities Network.**

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