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**Anchoring universities into (un)expected
realities: the engagement role of universities in
Asia and Africa**

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An introduction to the thematic paper series and the SUEUAA project

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The collection of papers in this series of Thematic Papers published by the SUEUAA (Strengthening the Urban Engagement of Universities in Africa and Asia) team focus on topics of relevance to project partners and the city regions and institutions they represent. Papers in this series cover: Migration, Gender, Sustainable Energy, the Environment, the Economy and Policy Rhetoric. Each paper is co-authored by a member of the University of Glasgow SUEUAA team, and at least two other partner Institutions from cities in the Global South. The following cities are represented in SUEUAA: Sanandaj, Islamic Republic of Iran; Duhok, Iraq; Manilla, Philippines; Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania; Johannesburg, South Africa; and, Harare, Zimbabwe.

The SUEUAA project was funded by the British Academy under the Cities and Infrastructures Programme part of the UK Government's £1.5 billion Global Challenges Research Fund 'to support cutting-edge research that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries through:

- challenge-led disciplinary and interdisciplinary research
- strengthening capacity for research and innovation within both the UK and developing countries
- providing an agile response to emergencies where there is an urgent research need'ⁱ

The SUEUAA project addresses a core problem in emerging economies of strengthening the urban engagement role of universities, and ways they contribute to developing sustainable cities in the context of the major social, cultural, environmental and economic challenges facing the global south. It uses a set of well-proven benchmarking tools as its principal method, and seeks to strengthen the capacity of universities to contribute to city resilience towards natural and human-made disasters. Examples of urban engagement include supporting the development of physical infrastructure, ecological sustainability, and social inclusion (including of migrants). It calls upon contributions from science and engineering, the arts, environmental sciences, social sciences and business studies. It assesses the extent to which universities in 6 countries (Iran, Iraq, the Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) respond to demands of society, and how through dialogue with city stakeholders this can be enhanced and impact on policy; it uses a collaborative team from the UK and emerging economies.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ <https://www.britac.ac.uk/global-challenges-research-fund-resilient-cities-infrastructure>

ⁱⁱ <http://sueuaa.org/>

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Anchoring universities into (un)expected realities: the engagement role of universities in Asia and Africa

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Abstract

To respond effectively to (un)expected realities (effects of climate change, environmental degradation, war and migration, accelerated urbanization), universities in Asia and Africa are called upon to accomplish their third mission by getting more involved in local municipalities and addressing city-level challenges. However, universities are not always prepared for this third mission, and policies reveal different levels of preparedness. Through a thematic rhetorical analysis of a wide range of policies, this paper argues that university policy discourses build on different, and oftentimes competing, approaches to university engagement. A detailed analysis of policies in six cities (Dar es Salaam, Duhok, Harare, Johannesburg, Manila, and Sanandaj) reveals how HEIs align with (un)expected social realities and work with local municipalities. While university-city partnerships exist in all six contexts, policies oftentimes remain broad in scope and provide little guidance to support resilience and appropriate local sustainable plans. Building on the experience accumulated by various stakeholders in the six cities, the paper makes a series of recommendations for policy change which has implications for a growing number of HEIs and city stakeholders confronted with similar challenges in their respective locales.

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Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
2. How is engagement understood at University level?	2
3. Current policy discourses in global contexts	3
4. Methodological and analytical approach	5
4.1 <i>Discourses on university engagement: a note on terminology</i>	6
5. Discourses on university engagement: old tropes and new exigencies	6
6. Policy Recommendations	11
Policies and related documents	15
Other References	18

1. Introduction

At a recent conference on November 3rd, 2017, The Ministry of Roads and Urban Development along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives from academic institutions met in Sanandaj (Iran) to discuss the role of universities in the context of their regional societal impact. The meeting highlighted the importance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)' engagement in significant areas, ranging from climate change to security and local development. The conference called for a paradigm shift whereby universities are expected to develop collaborations with the private local sectors. The meeting aimed to provide an evaluation of the engagement role of universities with local constituencies but, more importantly, it brought under discussion public perceptions and expectations from stakeholders regarding the importance of HEIs' active role in relation to city-level and regional challenges.

The Sanandaj conference represents one among the many examples in major cities across the globe where universities are called upon to respond to pressing global and local issues. To formulate and enact such responses, universities need to work more strategically with city-level stakeholders. If HEIs are to fulfil their third mission, i.e., the mission of public engagement and service in local communities, then universities are expected to consider the wider impact of their activities, expanding and challenging the traditional roles often associated with the academia. As Benneworth and Osborne (2014) point out, the third mission of universities has often been viewed as an adage to the main two functions: research and teaching. However, universities can become critical players in renewing communities and contributing to their development, bringing in innovation and supporting the civil society (Benneworth and Osborne, 2014, pp. 228-9).

While universities understand their public mission and strive to make a positive impact, many face a number of challenges that go well beyond the existence of appropriate infrastructure, financial and human resources. In many countries in Asia and Africa, the third mission of universities is challenged even further by a wide range of (un)expected realities, such as effects of climate change, environmental degradation, war and unforeseen migrant flows, accelerated urbanization, etc. Unfortunately, these realities are not only specific to these contexts, and learning from universities faced with such realities can provide valuable lessons and guidance to other HEIs that may find themselves in similar contexts. In fact, as Moore (2016) argues, in light of recent experiences and trends, these realities can be anticipated and planned for: "universities need to be configured much more deliberately for long-term investment in particular thematic knowledge areas that, we know already, are critical for the achievement of sustainability in the future" (p. 12). This paper looks at how universities respond to such realities by investigating policies and policy-related documents. The policy analysis brings into discussion two main arguments: (1) it highlights the need for clearer policy strategies and guidelines that could better support universities in accomplishing

their third mission; (2) it presents the tensions between what the policies seem to promote in their official discourses and what (un)expected realities actually call for.

Instead of taking a broad view vis-à-vis university engagement in relation to regional and national strategies, this paper investigates how universities envision their public engagement role in relation to city-level stakeholders. The focus on the city as a unit of analysis is in line with the growing focus on developing learning and sustainable cities that are better equipped to support their communities (European Commission, 2018; UNESCO, 2013). In light of an increased interest in the expandable power of “smart” cities (Roscia, Longo and Lazaroiu, 2013), paralleled by city-specific challenges (e.g., urban poverty and unemployment, rural-to-urban migration), this paper argues that universities seen in this context can redefine and renew their commitments to the third mission. As policy documents articulate some of the most important university aspirations, visions and commitments, the present paper proposes a detailed analysis of policies in six cities involved in the project, *Strengthening Urban Engagement of Universities in Asia and Africa (SUEUAA)*, including Dar es Salaam, Duhok, Harare, Johannesburg, Manila, and Sanandaj. The analysis of these policies will aim to answer the following research question:

- How do university policies in Asia and Africa reflect and develop engagement strategies that align with (un)expected social realities?

The paper is organized in five sections, moving from the larger context of current policy discourses to the analysis of specific university policy and policy-related documents in the six cities. The first section of this paper presents an overview of key engagement coordinates shared among the universities in the six cities. The second section outlines the larger context of university policies with a focus on different discourses tied to the third mission of HEIs, i.e., public engagement. Section three describes the methodology and analytical approach developed for this paper. The key findings are included in Section four where examples from a wide range of university policy documents illustrate various discourse positions adopted by universities in relation to their service and engagement missions. The final section offers a series of recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders from the university context and the public sector.

2. How is engagement understood at University level?

Based on the six city profiles developed for this project (see <http://sueuaa.org/>), university engagement must be understood in the context of a specific set of coordinates shared among the universities in their respective locales. These coordinates are not solely relevant to the six cities involved in the SUEUAA project; however, the analysis of university policies in the context of these cities provides important insights into possible responses that universities can formulate in relation to global and local challenges. The following analysis will demonstrate

that university engagement is understood differently, from one university context to another; therefore, this paper does not propose a single definition of university engagement. However, conditions of public engagement, policy orientations, global and local challenges are similar in the six cities. Different approaches to university engagement are discussed through specific case examples, while a series of common engagement coordinates have been identified as bringing together the many responses at the university and city-level. Engagement coordinates relevant to the universities in the six cities include:

- resource scarcity and resource endangerment (due to unexpected environmental changes and/or human interventions, such as war and migration flows);
- accelerated or sudden environmental changes and degradation (e.g., climate change, earthquakes, floods, typhoons);
- persistent and/or accelerated inequalities due to sudden changes in local cityscapes;
- unstable social and political environments;
- disparities among urban-rural communities and between city districts and sub-districts;
- health-related challenges among different segments of the population;
- technological advancements which may facilitate expedient interventions;
- expanding field of knowledge production, distribution and management emerging from recent projects and collaborations between universities and various stakeholders.

At the beginning of the policy analysis, it was anticipated that the discourse reflected in policy documents will reflect these coordinates and will address them consistently as they define the contexts in which universities conduct their activities and operations. However, as the following analysis will reveal, university policy discourses build on different, and oftentimes competing, approaches to university engagement, approaches which are not always attuned to all the coordinates listed above.

3. Current policy discourses in global contexts

University policies worldwide have adopted a wide range of discourses which have been driven by different forces: the logic of global capital, neoliberal ideologies (Sterling, 2017), processes of democratization and knowledge economies (Brennan, King, & Lebeau, 2004), the drive to internationalisation, and strategic regional development. While different universities tend to define their own visions and strategic plans, many seem to increasingly align themselves with an ‘emerging global model’ based on a well-defined set of parameters. According to Mohrman et al. (2008), such a model identifies a global mission which universities adhere to, prioritizes intense research activities, draws upon a wide range of funding sources, and acknowledges institutional complexity. This global model also actively integrates a focus on public engagement in the form of “new relationships with government and industry” and “global collaborations with other institutions” (Mohrman et al., 2008, p. 5),

which tackle both processes of internationalisation (e.g., student exchange programmes) and research collaborations (e.g., international research collaborations).

The rhetoric around the global model of university engagement is oftentimes complemented by a second type of discourse built around notions of regional economic development and competitiveness. Such a discourse starts from the premise that universities can harness their regional resources and thus gain visibility and advantage over other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). To maintain a favourable position in the big league of global universities, HEIs need to distinguish themselves by encouraging local projects that will put forward the best resources and examples of research and public engagement. This type of discourse is often supported by what Lebeau and Bennion (2014) call, “the knowledge and innovation paradigm” (p. 278). Within this discourse, universities are expected to support forward-thinking projects that contribute to the development of resources and initiatives at the local/regional level.

A third and more recent type of discourse is the one grounded in “place-based leadership” (cf. Benneworth, Pinheiro and Karlsen, p. 235) and “community-based research” (Strand et al qtd. in Granados Sanchez, 2014). Against the logic of big knowledge markets and global distribution of resources, some universities focus on the development of localized leadership and projects relevant to local stakeholders. This model encourages not only the maximization of resources in a particular locale, but also the active involvement in public activities immediately relevant to the realities surrounding the university environment. A localized model implicitly adopts a bottom-up approach of public engagement whereby strategic and innovative projects can have concrete and immediate effects in nearby communities.

The three discourses briefly presented above are among the most prominent discourses that universities adopt to guide their policies. The challenge, though, is that such documents rarely embrace only one type of discourse and therefore lead to the amalgamation of university strategies, action plans and visions that bring different commitments in tension. As Benneworth et al. (2016) point out, universities oftentimes experience “mission overload,” trying to encapsulate too many directions (regional, national, global) under broad policy guidelines. These policies betray a *one-size-fits-all* approach which leaves academic staff and various stakeholders insufficiently equipped to deal with complex problems at hand, such as concrete local problems that communities face in specific locales.

When more localized approaches are set in place, these do not always carry the same value as the more broadly defined policies. Local responses to various challenges and regional commitments in policy documents are viewed as “unprestigious” compared to other policy orientations (Benneworth et al., 2017, p. 443). A focus on university’s growth on the global market and its increased competitiveness at an international scale carry more weight in policy documents because such alignments contribute to the rhetoric of university prestige. Such evaluations implicitly may have negative effects on various university engagements in local projects because these may not be seen as contributing to the wider (i.e., global) image

of the university. These tensions in commitment, as well as their respective competing discourses in various policy documents, were reviewed and evaluated in the policy documents for the six cities included in the SUEUAA project.

4. Methodological and analytical approach

To investigate the engagement role of universities in policy documents related to the six cities, for this working paper a wide range of policy documents, news reports, university missions and strategic plans, university internal communications, country profiles drafted by university partners involved in the project (see <http://sueuaa.org/>), as well as secondary resources were gathered and analysed. As this analysis focussed on the engagement role of universities, policy documents were investigated with particular attention to how HEIs are presented in their capacity as active players within local municipalities.

The challenge in conducting this analysis emerged from the scarcity of documents which explicitly provide guidelines for university engagement in relation to city-level constituencies. While university documents provide explicit guidelines regarding the terms of engagement that universities should follow in general, references to city-level partnerships and activities are quite limited. To compensate for this, the analysis of documents widened its scope by incorporating regional and national policies that govern HEI activities and mandate wider action plans. Within these documents, particular attention was given to any guidelines related to city-university commitments and partnerships. Besides investigating these wider policies, the present analysis also took into account documentation related to specific projects in the six cities which, although not policy-oriented, provide critical information about the role of universities in specific contexts. In other words, where policy documents related to city-level involvement were not present, indicators of commitment on the part of universities towards their local communities were collected based on individual research projects, applications and/or emergent partnerships.

To investigate policy discourses, the analysis drew on a qualitative approach, using a thematic rhetorical analysis. Building on the methodology developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), the policy and policy-related documents were analysed for emerging themes related to the roles of universities and city-level engagement. The analysis was particularly focussed on identifying themes that describe: (1) how universities position themselves in relation to various stakeholders (e.g. the city, the wider public, specific communities, etc.), (2) how universities position themselves in relation to specific local issues and challenges (e.g. climate change, natural disasters, war and conflict, resource depletion, migration, urbanization, etc.), and (3) how universities position themselves in relation to the notion of resilience. The rhetorical dimension of the analysis indicates the persuasive nature of policy documents, the positioning of various stakeholders, and the discursive ways in which universities construct mission narratives that aim to make an impact on various communities. The initial themes were further refined and are included in the following sections, along with specific examples that illustrate the implementation of policy guidelines.

It is important to note that the policy documents analysed in this paper have not been reviewed with the sole goal of critiquing and identifying gaps. Instead, the analysis tried to avoid a deficit model whereby policies are viewed as lagging behind the realities and exigencies on the ground. While this may not be the case with all the policies discussed here, this paper argues that some policy documents can provide important guidelines for policy makers who want to develop coherent, operational, and widely relevant policies. Looking into policies of universities located in cities that have experienced and responded to various global and local challenges enabled the identification of strategic actions that can serve as guidelines for other universities in similar contexts, as well as for policy makers who want to be prepared for unforeseeable challenges in their own environments.

4.1 Discourses on university engagement: a note on terminology

A cursory overview of policy documents in all six cities reveals two important aspects about the role of university engagement: (1) the third mission of universities is explicitly mentioned and integrated in policy documents in all six contexts; however, (2) this mission is framed in different terms from one context to the other. The different terminology is not merely a simple language variation on the same core term of “public engagement.” The choice of terms demonstrates the position, importance, and specific understanding of “university engagement” in each city-context. Table 1 sums up discursive positions regarding the role of universities, the following sub-sections provide more detail by making specific references to university and/or HEIs policies.

5. Discourses on university engagement: old tropes and new exigencies

Theme one: university policies tend to share and replicate broad discourses of economic growth and sustainable development, internationalisation, and innovation (with particular attention to technological innovations)

In line with the “emerging global model,” university policies in all six cities echo the importance of supporting the development efforts in their regions. As the six cities have experienced many social and environmental challenges, the universities recognize the importance of their role in contributing to the good standing and competitiveness of their reputation as reflected by the development indicators in their regions. Global competitiveness is not just an aspiration that universities share, but an imperative: For example, the University of Duhok presents itself as:

“a world class university that heralds positive social environmental, technological, and economic transformation in the Duhok Governorate, Kurdistan Region, Iraq and the world at large”

Similarly, The University of Zimbabwe suggested it was:

“committed to teaching, research and community service” as well as to “innovative higher education, cutting-edge research and service provision that is responsive to Zimbabwe and beyond” (UoZ Strategic Plan, 2016-2020)

Stability, good governance, sustainable growth and shared benefits (cf. *Tanzania Development Vision 2025*) are at the forefront of university missions (pp. 15-6). However, university policies remain quite broad in positioning their own engagement in relation to specific action plans and guidelines that would support university-public partnerships. As Bailey, Cloete & Pillay (2011) remark, policies provide a “broad human development strategy” that is not very clearly related to achievable and actionable objectives at various levels. In the case of Tanzania and the University of Dar es Salaam, “there is no real linkage between economic development and higher education planning at the ministerial level, and higher education issues are limited to only one ministry” (Bailey, Cloete & Pillay, 2011, p. 107). Similarly, Bastos and Rebois (2011) identify a gap between ambitious policy plans and the everyday experiences of “the realities of the country” (p. 61).

If university policies are entangled in a broad and generic discourse of development of social engagement, national policies across different ministries tend to better identify and articulate social challenges that call upon university interventions in the public and private sectors. For instance, the Ministry of Planning in Iraq has recognized the many challenges that cities such as Duhok are currently experiencing. City migration, unequal distribution of resources and uneven district developments, accelerated growth of population and its impacts on the city environment are among the main pressing challenges that city stakeholders need to address.

“We recognize the disadvantages of women and girls; the impoverished, widows and orphans; political prisoners, the victims of oppression, and relatives of martyrs and genocide victims; and ethnic and religious minorities. We not only want to help the disadvantaged, but we also want to ensure the development and inclusion of youth.”
(Ministry of Planning, 2013, p. 11)

In their recent policy document (2012-2016), the Ministry of Planning has drafted *A New City Policy*, specifically identifying clear pathways towards supporting the development of cities. The challenges identified in these plans regarding city governance and development represent important opportunities for universities to contribute to the welfare of different communities. Others, such as University of Johannesburg describe the importance of serving humanity, and aims to be:

an international University of choice, anchored in Africa, dynamically shaping the future,” while “inspiring its community to transform and serve humanity through innovation and the collaborative pursuit of knowledge.”

Theme two: universities are in the process of building and expanding the infrastructure and logistical support to encourage public engagement

Although city-level engagements are not consistently mentioned in the university documents reviewed for this project, the awareness of university officials in relation to the third mission is reflected in efforts to establish centres, programmes, units, and innovation parks. These hubs serve as meeting points between businesses and other local stakeholders, as well as representatives of the public. The management and strategic activities of these hubs are mandated and regulated through policy documents (e.g., Manila). However, in the case of cities such as Sanandaj, university partners (e.g., Sanandaj municipality, Water and Sewage Organization, Council of Traffic, Water Bureau) are briefly mentioned and their role in relation to university strategic plans are yet to be fully captured in policy documents

Extension Programmes, Manila, The Philippines

The third mission of universities in Manila (and the Philippines) is framed in terms of “extension” programmes which carry out the engagement role of universities. The Commission on Higher Education issues regular Memoranda that outline the direction, structure, and strategic actions that universities are expected to achieve. The extension function of universities is charged with the “transfer and/or application of technology/knowledge that contribute to the attainment of the country’s development goals” (CMO No.8, 2010), as well as with the response to the needs of communities and the larger society. Extension programmes include a rich portfolio of activities: “training, technical assistance and advisory services, communication/information services, community outreach activities (e.g., community-based social services, pilot projects, mobile clinic, etc.) and technology transfer and utilization.” (CMO No. 8, 2010)

A notable example of consistent collaborative work between various city stakeholders and universities is the Guateng-City Region Observatory in South Africa. The Observatory aims to redefine the coordinates of sociality and sustainable development by placing emphasis on the city-region, bringing in researchers and other local key players to map, analyse, and contribute to an entire cluster of cities, towns and urban nodes. The Observatory is the result of a strong collaboration between the University of Witwatersrand, the University of Johannesburg and Guateng municipalities that aim to tackle challenges such as high levels of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. Even with such a strong infrastructure, though, the public engagement role of universities is yet to be fully deployed. An assessment of the culture of research and development indicates that South Africa is not a “discovery” country and the link between commercial pathways emerging from research and development projects is not always evident for local researchers (Technology Innovation Agency, 2017).

Theme three: university policies do not always reflect the wide range of ongoing public engagement and impact activities

Collaborative projects between universities and city stakeholders exist in all six cities although these are not always fully captured in the policy documents. Individual academic units and staff members consistently engage with local communities. Such is the case of the University of Duhok that welcomed Syrian migrants and helped support displaced families. The involvement of University of Zimbabwe in the Harare Slum Upgrading Programme is another example. Municipal and community stakeholders collaborated and participated in the sustainable development process of slums in Harare with the goal of addressing “resilience of the urban poor.” This partnership was explicitly built on a city-wide “participation and institutionalisation” model rather than a project-based approach (Muchadenyika 2015). The shift to shared governance (particularly in relation to city stakeholders) and engagement with local challenges appears prominently in the actual implementation strategies of the project and less explicitly in university policy documents

Theme four: Resilience does not feature prominently in policy documents

University policies embrace the discourse of development without always explicitly engaging with the many challenges they need to address in their respective locales. For this reason, policies take a forward-looking approach, focussing on the potential for development. This approach oftentimes obscures the discourse of resilience and misses the opportunity to turn projects focussed on resilience (be it human, environmental, industry and technology-related, etc.) into policy-relevant examples. The city profiles developed for the SEUAA project demonstrate that universities are continuously responding to specific local circumstances and the city provides them with a productive environment where local and global issues can be addressed in creative ways (e.g., the eco-garden in Duhok). The avoidance of using the discourse of resilience seems to point to a preference for more positive messages that the universities want to create around their third mission by relating it to broader policy terms such as development, internationalization, sustainability and growth (see theme one).

Theme five: University-city partnerships reveal a multi-scale approach to city-level challenges actioned upon by multiple stakeholders

The six cities included in the SUEUAA project have developed complex responses that tackle not one challenge at a time, but multi-scale problems that affect various parts of the cities and their respective communities. Recognizing the multiple pressure points on the wellbeing of citizens and their environments, collaborations between municipalities and universities adopt a holistic and ecological orientation to social problems, reflected primarily in project-related documentation rather than policies at the university-level.

Project: Zawita Eco-Garden, Duhok, Iraq

The plans for developing an eco-garden in the city of Duhok reveal a strong partnership between the University of Duhok, the Directorate of Environment and the Directorate of Forestry and Rangeland. The garden takes a multi-dimensional approach whereby multiple city-level challenges are tackled through this creative project. The garden is designed to provide “displaced people and local people with work opportunities.” In response to the sudden influx of Syrian refugees and other displaced communities (see the SUEUAA profile of Duhok), the garden will try to absorb the labor power in this project which will serve local communities. The garden’s second role is to function as a hub of knowledge exchange, acting as a space of confluence between university research activities and public knowledge. Third, the garden will address the visible effects of recent climate changes, excessive grazing and land use, as well as processes of urbanization which have reduced the number of areas available for recreation in the city of Duhok.

University policies do not reflect this multi-scale approach; however, national policies and strategic plans regarding HEIs seem to be more attuned to the need for a more holistic type of engagement. These policies do not look only into current social challenges, but they also aim to anticipate and prepare for upcoming challenges that may be drawn by processes of globalization, industrialization and human mobility.

An example of this is The Ministry of Planning in Iraq which identified population health as one of the priorities calling for sustained intervention to address “the illnesses typical to Middle East and North Africa” while also:

“prepar[ing] ourselves for new health problems, those that typically predominate in industrialised countries- non-communicable diseases and injuries (Ministry of Planning, 2013)

To achieve these goals, an “architecture of exchange” needs to be put in place to bring together various stakeholders who are willing to cross the traditional boundaries of their roles and identify new models of knowledge transfer and production (Moore, 2016, p. 7).

6. Policy Recommendations

Policy and policy-related documents analysed in this paper provide a rich and complex landscape of responses that universities have developed. While many of the policies reveal ambitious sets of goals in terms of wider international/global engagement, university’s active role at the city level is reflected more in specific projects, as well as called upon by national/regional policies. In cases where universities are actively involved in engagement

activities with city stakeholders, such commitments are yet to be fully recognized and encouraged in policy. Given that the projects cited in this paper demonstrate the positive impact that universities have on their municipalities and their diverse communities, this paper calls for the development of city-related policies. Such policies can provide clear guidance on universities' involvement in supporting sustainable cities while drawing on the already existent local expertise gained through individual city intervention projects. The following recommendations are meant to encourage university policy makers to adopt a discourse whereby city-level engagement is valued not only for its local relevance to multiple stakeholders, but also for its potential to serve as a model to other cities around the globe who may experience similar challenges.

R1: States of emergency and insecurity, social precarity and accentuated social inequalities demand flexible and clear policy guidelines so that city-level stakeholders and HEIs provide appropriate responses. In this sense, university policy documents need to better align themselves to the realities in their immediate environments.

R2: HEIs and city-level actors should work closely to identify, prioritize and target local challenges. A focus on city-level challenges will provide clear guidelines and strategic actions that, in turn, can inform policy makers in other university contexts on possible responses to similar challenges. Such an approach will be more relevant for the public as it will provide genuine responses to clearly identified issues. Locally-informed policies will also break the cycle of formulating strategic plans based on outside agendas (Bailey, Cloete & Pillay, 2011, p. 70).

R3: While the discourse of resilience is not prominent in university policy documents, this paper argues that public engagement should include resilience at the forefront of their agenda. In the face of (un)expected and shifting realities, as outlined in this paper, cities and HEIs need to be prepared to provide guidelines for quick response and intervention. A discourse focussed on resilience should be put forward as a source of creative energy and social impact.

R4: Policy documents need to develop crises protocols to support local municipalities. While humanitarian and/or environmental crises cannot be anticipated, the accumulated experience and expertise that universities in the six cities have gathered place them in the position of outlining strategies and drafting response protocols.

R5: University policies should not embrace only a “responsive” approach to public engagement. Cities and their respective communities are dynamic entities and, thus, require guidance from policies that build flexibility of engagement. As strategic partners, HEIs should identify and develop guidelines for emergent and flexible partnership models. While the scope of these partnerships will be defined depending on emergent needs, the infrastructural foundation can be developed in advance to facilitate a more rapid intervention. A planned yet open and flexible approach to university engagement can be developed based on recent examples of university-city partnerships, such as the ones presented in this paper.

R6: University policies should define and operationalize engagement with the public at different scales and in various modes. This paper does not suggest that universities should completely move away from discourses of development, growth and internationalisation. However, these should not be the only scales against which universities should define their mission and strategies. Engagement at other scales (e.g., at the level of cities, neighbourhoods, specific communities) will be critical for a flexible positioning of universities within their immediate context.

R7: Policies that support the engagement role of universities should contribute to building a culture of trust and social commitment. While in some of the examples shared above, the good will of researchers lies behind proposed projects at the city-level and beyond, initiatives cannot be moved forward if the universities are not trusted as key players in their endeavours.

R8: To address (un)expected challenges, university policies should add to their “visions” and identify “anchor points of engagement” or “points of pressure” that call for immediate and coherent actions and strategies. Building on a “rolling model” of policy development, universities should envisage their third mission in more dynamic and flexible terms, adapted to current emergent social realities.

Policy “Rolling Model”, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

The Strategic Plan of the Tanzania Commission for Universities (2016) recognizes the need for flexible policies and has adopted a “rolling model approach” whereby the set of strategic actions proposed are regularly updated and revised yearly in light of new demands and needs in the educational sector and beyond. The plan aims to remain a flexible tool of reference “in line with current realities” (p.5). The agency is committed to support “systematic growth and excellence” while also ensuring the development of internal and external linkages. The proposed plan is built around Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including an attention to climate change, sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, inclusive societies and wider global partnerships, to name a few. While not necessarily connected to city-level challenges, the policy model seems fit to responding and addressing emergent issues at different levels in the educational sector and beyond.

The recommendations included here call for a rebalancing of global-local scales of engagement in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Following the International Conference on Learning Cities, The Cork Call for Action for Learning Cities (2017) brings to the forefront similar observations about global-local forms of engagement. While partnerships, networks and global links are necessary for tackling current global challenges, these can be channelled and articulated in relation to “mindful learning cultures in our cities that foster global consciousness and citizenship through local action to implement SDGs.” Including city-level engagements more consistently into university policies will

enable different stakeholders to better serve their communities and ensure more equitable and safe environments.

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Duhok	Manila	Harare	Johannesburg	Sanandaj	Dar es Salaam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universities contribute to nation-building in systems of governance challenged by economic and political insecurities - universities are providers of training and capacity building for the public and private sector - universities provide consulting services - universities are key partners building awareness among local communities and the wider public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - extension function and extension programmes - clearly defined and well developed infrastructure for extension activities, including criteria for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universities should be “at the forefront of the industrialization drive” - universities can provide evidence-based solutions - universities need to contribute to participatory planning and development (Muchadenyik, 2015) - universities provide extension and community services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universities deliver high impact economic development projects - universities empower communities - universities offer client advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universities support national development efforts - universities have close ties with regional and provincial organizations - universities contribute to urban development by (re)training the workforce - universities provide consultancy and assistance to local policy makers and practitioners - universities carry our “research, enterprise, and community engagement activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universities develop human resources for the government and civil service - universities are instruments for development - the university mission is understood in terms of public service (“public goods”), outreach (“extension”) and consultancy - the 3rd mission is viewed as quite new and not fully operationalized - universities are agents of knowledge transfer and commercialization with the public/private sector
	Extension Programmes Centres for Excellence and Centres for Development	Industry Creating Hubs	Township Marketplace Platform	Entrepreneurship Units and Growth Centres, Support Incubators, Science and Technology Parks	Institute of Production Innovation Research and Development Institutes

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