

International Day of Education

The role of higher education in strengthening rule of law worldwide and in achieving SDG 16 by 2030

Vienna, 24 January 2020

DRAFT Final Report



This report has been prepared by the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) as a summary of the panellist interventions during the International Day of Education as part of the Education for Justice (E4J) initiative focusing on the tertiary level of education, held in Vienna on 24 January 2020.

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I. Background

Education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 24 January as [International Day of Education](#), in celebration of the role of education for peace and development. Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth and adults behind. SDG 4 (quality education) is considered by many as one of the most important Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as it enables the achievement of the other SDGs. The same is true for SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) which is guiding the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

UNODC, through its [Education for Justice \(E4J\) initiative](#), a component of the [Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration](#), has linked these two important SDGs and is working with hundreds of educators and educational institutions (primary, secondary and tertiary) from around the world to support the next generation in both, understanding and addressing problems that can undermine the rule of law.

Acknowledging the important work already being done by academia and educators to support the international community in its efforts to achieve the SDGs, UNODC, within its E4J initiative, also aims at strengthening the cooperation with higher education institutions and academia. Universities (and other higher education institutions) have a crucial role to play in today's rapidly changing global system, which is increasingly driven by knowledge, information, innovation and ideas. However, higher education institutions need to be supported and recognized as places where the next generation will be empowered to become the leaders that are needed for tomorrow. Equally important to prosperity and innovation are leaders who understand the rule of law, good governance and how organized crime, terrorism and corruption can be countered effectively.

UNODC and its E4J initiative is empowering this next generation of leaders, policy-makers, judges, business women and business men, influencers, etc., by working with hundreds of lecturers from more than 550 universities and higher education institutions (including police academies, business schools, etc.) – as these educators are the ones that will influence and strengthen the next generation. Together with more than 600 academics and national experts, **9 University Module Series for lecturers** have been developed, available in various languages. The objective of this major undertaking is to support lecturers around the world in their efforts to transmit knowledge and create a deeper understanding of rule of law related issues, with a focus on the subject areas of [crime prevention and criminal justice](#), [integrity and ethics](#), [anti-corruption](#), [organized crime](#), [trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants](#), [firearms](#), [cybercrime](#), [wildlife, forest and fisheries crime](#), as well as [counter-terrorism](#). All the material developed (in total more than 110 university modules that constitute more than 4,000 printable pages of peer-reviewed material) is available for free on the [E4J online platform](#).

In addition, UNODC has brought together more than 1,200 lecturers and trainers in

workshops dedicated to the various topics related to the rule of law. These workshops, conducted around the world, have provided them with a platform to engage with each other to share both their lecturing experiences, and to jointly come up with creative ways to teach on rule of law related matters so that SDG 16 can be strengthened. These workshops and trainings are complemented by **UNODC’s E4J 2019-2020 Grants Programme for higher education institutions** and through **academic paper competitions**. These opportunities are undertaken regularly together with academic partners to support the participation of young scholars in important conferences – to give a voice to young scholars, especially from the Global South, and to empower them to “sit at the table” and share their research and ideas. All of these activities aim to strengthen capacity at the tertiary level and increase the overall quality of teaching, thereby supporting various SDGs, including SDG 4 (quality teaching), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).

II. Aim and focus of the event

The International Day of Education is an important moment to pause and reflect on concepts such as the rule of law, justice and peace and their role within educational frameworks. More importantly, it affords the opportunity to reiterate the importance of cooperation and strong coordination among stakeholders like policymakers, academia and the UN to work towards achieving the SDGs and create the environment needed for the next generation to thrive, flourish and reach their full potential.

UNODC’s E4J initiative is a relatively new and innovative undertaking aimed at strengthening the prevention side of UNODC’s work. The objective of this event is to use the opportunity of the International Day of Education to brief Member States, representatives from Civil Society and academia on the efforts undertaken by UNODC and its partners to link SDG 4 and SDG 16 to support their achievements by 2030. The event aims to raise awareness about the importance to teach on rule of law and related subjects at higher education institutions and to highlight the necessity of new partnerships and bridges in order to make this more effective.

Furthermore, the event will also highlight the newly forged partnership between UNODC/E4J and the International Association of Universities (IAU) as well as other partners and key stakeholders. The aim of these partnerships will be to support the promotion of rule of law related educational material at universities thereby assisting the achievement of the SDGs. Partnerships such as these help to put these tools in the hands of those who can best communicate rule of law issues to the next generation and in turn empower them to promote and uphold these values.

Finally, the event will be used as an opportunity to provide updates about the E4J – Doha Grant Programme. With these grants UNODC seeks to empower higher education institutions to strengthen rule of law education at their universities. 227 applications were received from higher education institutions from 69 countries.

Audience:

- High-level policymakers and representatives from Member States;
- Representatives from Higher Education Institutions (HEI) & academia;
- E4J partner institutions;
- Civil society organizations (CSO).

III. Overview of the Introduction, Welcome Remarks and Keynote

The Director of Treaty Affairs opened the event, which was attended by 80 participants from member states, HEI, academics, and CSOs. The Director opened by thanking valued partners that have worked together with UNODC under the E4J initiative to produce valuable educational materials at the tertiary level. These materials, such as the E4J Module series help to achieve the SDGs, in particularly SDGs 4, 16 and 17.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education of the State of Qatar delivering Welcome Remarks

In the welcoming remarks delivered by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education of the State of Qatar, Mr. Omar Abdulaziz Al-Naama, the important role of Education in Achieving SDG 16 was highlighted. The State of Qatar, through its support of the Global Programme on the Implementation of the Doha Declaration and the various work of Universities in Qatar to work closely with the E4J team here in Vienna helps, to achieve this SDG and others.



order to achieve them.

In the keynote address delivered by Dr. Hilligje van't Land, Secretary General of the International Association of Universities, the need for HEIs to focus on quality education covering aspects related to the rule of law was noted. The E4J university module series was also listed as an example of a good practice of academics and the UN working together to develop a high-quality education material with shared expertise. The Secretary General also stressed the interconnection of the interconnectedness of the SDGs and the need for strengthened partnerships in

IV. Panel Discussion Session

The 5-speaker panel, which was moderated by the Director for Treaty Affairs, discussed their contributions and ideas about the role of the HEIs and partnerships addressing SDG 16.

Mr. Marco Teixeira, the Senior Programme Officer and Coordinator of the Global Programme for the Implementation for the Doha Declaration at UNODC mentioned the important work already being done with the E4J and valued partners at the at the IO level, private sector, NGO and importantly the tertiary level. An overview of the University Modules series was delivered as well as an explanation of the E4J Grants Programme, which seeks to empower academics to use the E4J modules in their local contexts.



and students to address challenges posed to the rule of law.

The Director of the Diplomatic Academy, Ambassador Emil Brix, stressed the increasing importance of a rule of law focus at HEIs and the special role universities have in addressing these issues. The director highlighted universities place as institutions that can think outside the box and look for creative solutions to complex problems. The role of universities as places that can facilitate creative exchanges for faculty

Dr. Donna Harris, Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Department of Economics at Oxford University in the United Kingdom highlighted the importance of not just what students learned but how they learn. The ability of the E4J module exercises to cater to different types of learning was noted. Additionally, the new methodology measuring attitude and behavioral change after teaching with the E4J modules was shared. Moreover, the initial results of the pilot study of the E4J modules positive effect on the change of the behavior of students and teachers was mentioned as being successful.



Pictured: panel and keynote speaker from the event

The Executive Director of the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), Dr. Math Noortmann, stressed the need for universities not to focus on one SDG, but rather recognize the interconnectedness of the SDGs and the need to cooperate to tackle them. The need for academics to connect and work with practitioners was also stressed. Furthermore, the need for the SDGs to be mainstreamed through different disciplines was also highlighted.

The youth representative voiced the need for more teaching on RoL related issues at universities which should be incorporated into classrooms. Additionally, courses on these subjects should be aimed at achieving a lifestyle change and not just a typical course needed to receive credits for graduation. The potential for the E4J modules to achieve this both inside universities and the possibility for them to be translated outside of them was underlined.

V. Q and A

Member states highlighted the successful partnerships between UNODC and universities in their respective countries. Member States also noted the need for further disseminating these materials and potentially through ministries of education in the future. Member States also congratulated UNODC’s E4J initiative for the development of the modules with local and regional considerations. Several Member States emphasized the alignment of goals with the E4J initiative to achieve SDG 16 in their own national contexts. Furthermore, a presentation was delivered by the Peruvian artist Vania Masias, which highlighted the connection between sports and education to empower the next generation to tackle rule of law challenges.

VI. Impact and Social Media Outreach

The event was attended by more than 70 participants; pre- and post-event, social media was used to inform on this Education for Justice (E4J) event.



Following the event, cooperation letters were signed with the Academic Council on the United Nations (ACUNS), the International Association of Universities (IAU) and the University of Salzburg – stakeholders with whom the E4J initiative is already closely working with.



@acunsvienna Executive Director @mnoortmann on #Act4RuleOfLaw education: "Having a university education doesn't guarantee knowing ethics. Universities are a breeding ground for what we should do w/ #SDGs — that is, to integrate them and mainstream them."




Other tweets:

 **UNODC's Doha Declaration Global Progra...** @DohaDeclarati... · Jan 24
#EducationDay in Vienna

@JohnBrandolino: "It's a privilege for @UNODC to bring together valued partners working to support higher education institutions, which are ideally placed to help prevent some of the greatest challenges to the #RuleOfLaw".

#Act4RuleOfLaw



 **Bianca Kopp** @biancakvienna1 · Jan 24
The #Education4Justice initiative is working with higher education institutions & academic partners from around the world. For more information: unodc.org/e4j/tertiary/i...



Marco Teixeira @MarcoTeixeiraUN
On this #EducationDay, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for our strong cooperation with @acunsvienna, @IAU_AIU, and @UniSalzburg....

 **UNODC's Doha Declaration Global Progra...** @DohaDeclarati... · Jan 24
#EducationDay

@DonhataiHarris, @UniOfOxford: "Ethics never came up in economics at university, so I jumped at the opportunity to work on the #Education4Justice modules as an educator. There's a lack of teaching in ethics, the aim of @UNODC is changing the mindset of students."





UNODC's Doha Declaration Global Progra... @DohaDeclarati... · Jan 21

To mark the upcoming #EducationDay, @DohaDeclaration is hosting an #Education4Justice event at @UNODC HQ in #Vienna.

Join us in celebrating the power of education to inspire youth to #Act4RuleOfLaw!

Apply for your access pass before 6 pm CET 22 Jan: unodc-e4j@un.org



The poster features the UNODC logo and the Doha Declaration logo at the top. A central graphic shows the date '24 JAN 2020' in a large red circle, with '14:00-16:00' and 'Conference Room C4 Vienna International Centre' around it. The main title is 'INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION' followed by the subtitle 'The Role of Higher Education in strengthening rule of law worldwide and in achieving SDG 16 by 2030'. Below this, it says 'RSVP to: unodc-e4j@un.org — unodc.org/e4j'. At the bottom is the 'Act4RuleofLaw' logo. On the right side, there is a section titled 'ABOUT THE EVENT' with sub-sections for 'Background and Context', 'Time Date and Location', and 'Registration for the event'. The 'Background and Context' section discusses the importance of education in achieving SDG 16 and mentions the Doha Declaration. The 'Time Date and Location' section specifies the event is on 24 January 2020 at the Vienna International Centre, Conference Room C4. The 'Registration for the event' section provides a link to apply for an access pass.