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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

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Solutions session at the Second World Summit for Social Development “Empowering Social Development through Higher Education Efforts: Scalable Leadership Solutions from LEAP-FAST”

People



: 4 Nov 2025

	:	Side Event
	:	Doha, Qatar
	:	6 11 2025
	:	1 Days
	:	Decentralize Cooperation Programme
	:	https://unitar.org/about/news-stories/news/unitar-second-world-summit-social-de...
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	:	UNESCO, , Majmaah University



This Solutions Session highlighted the transformative potential of higher education in advancing core dimensions of social development — notably poverty eradication, inclusive employment, and equitable opportunity. Anchored in the

global vision set out by the Second World Summit on Social Development (WSSD), the session underscores how academic institutions can play a catalytic role in shaping just and inclusive societies.

Drawing on the case of LEAP-FAST (Leaders in Higher Education Alliance & Programme – For Accelerating Sustainability Transformations), the session explored how targeted, future-oriented leadership development initiatives can equip early-career academics with the skills, values, and agency needed to navigate and transform complex social realities. Particular attention was paid to strengthening institutional capacities in volatile labour markets as higher education institutions need to remain relevant in preparing future change agents. The session also focused on fostering education systems that respond to regional development challenges, especially in the Global South. The session provided an opportunity to generate ideas and inputs from participants on how to steer higher education transformations and provided inputs for the future guidelines.



The session aimed to position LEAP-FAST as a scalable, practice-based model that directly contributes to the WSSD's social development priorities. It demonstrated how higher education can generate long-term value by cultivating socially responsive, entrepreneurial leadership among the next generation of academic professionals.

Participants engaged in dialogue around policy-relevant strategies for embedding collaborative governance, systems thinking, and inclusive innovation into academic leadership pathways.

The session also aimed to identify interest in regional adaptation and partnership, particularly in contexts where academic leadership ecosystems are nascent or fragmented.

Another key outcome was to strengthen global networks committed to fostering inclusive and locally grounded leadership programmes that align with global development goals.

By convening actors from diverse regions and sectors, the session issued a call for ideas and concluded with a collective call to action to support higher education's role in building the capabilities, values, and partnerships needed to realize the social transformations envisioned in the WSSD Declaration.



Wider role of higher education as a societal actor

- Role of young voices
- Role of leadership
- Participant experience in the LEAP-FAST
- Role of Majmaah University in sponsoring global leadership programme and regional insight



Moderated panel discussion



Representatives from academia, UN agencies, government, and international organizations