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Institute for  
Lifelong Learning

## UNESCO World Higher Education Conference 2022

**18-20 May 2022, Barcelona, Spain**

*Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 14:30 CET*

### Roundtable: How can higher education institutions (HEIs) be transformed into lifelong learning institutions? Strategic reflections and discussions

Our societies are rapidly changing because of environmental, scientific, and technological transformations. Coping with these changes and shaping the future accordingly requires creative and innovative policy responses. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call on countries to “promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, thus establishing lifelong learning (LLL) as central for achieving a sustainable future but also as a goal in itself. Mobilizing HEIs to transform into lifelong learning institutions is key to realizing this goal. They are in a unique position to positively shape societies through their expertise in knowledge production, skills development, and exchange. Opening up to the wider society through lifelong learning enables HEIs to take on this active role. This roundtable will focus on what aspects the transformation into lifelong learning institutions entails, touching upon topics such as institutional strategies, funding and organizational structures, quality assurance mechanisms, widening access, providing various learning formats, developing innovative teaching and learning modalities, offering flexible pathways, strengthening community engagement and more. Some key findings of the collaborative research project by UIL and Shanghai Open University (SOU) on the contribution of HEIs to lifelong learning will be introduced as an input for discussions. It is expected the panel session will contribute to understanding what defines a HEI that follows a lifelong learning approach, what the opportunities and barriers are for HEIs to make the transformation, as well as promising examples that exist around the world.

Format, aims and target group: The roundtable shall be highly interactive. The session will start with an input by the UIL Director, highlighting some outcomes of UIL and SOU’s collaborative research project and in particular some survey results. The moderator will then invite the panelists to provide their perspectives on the transformation of HEIs, based on a set of pre-defined key issues and questions. This will be followed by an open discussion based on questions from the audience (on site and online). To enhance the involvement of the audience, it could also be interesting to prepare 3-4 questions for a poll among all participants (e.g. What would you consider the main barriers for HEIs involvement in LLL? What would you consider the most important action to take to enhance HE participation of disadvantaged learners?).

Modality: hybrid

Participants: As many on-site participants as possible (depending on the size of the room) + online participants

Proposed duration: 90 minutes (5min introduction of panelists, 60 min, perspectives of panelists (20 min presentation+ 40 min Q&A between the moderator and panelists), 20min open discussion based on questions from the on-site and online audience, 5min closing)

Speakers:

- Moderator: Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
- Mr Wei Jia, President, Shanghai Open University (SOU) (online)
- Speaker: Mr Budd Hall, Co-Chair on Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, University of Victoria
- Speaker: Ms Edna Bonilla Serna, Secretary of Education, City of Bogotá
- Speaker: Mr Michael Gaebel, Director Higher Education Policy Unit, European Universities Association (EUA)