

United Nations University

Annual Report 2024

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United Nations University
53-70 Jingumae 5-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8925 JAPAN

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About the Cover
The artwork on the cover of this report represents UNU’s 13 institutes, which collaboratively generate evidence-based solutions for sustainable development.

Rector's Welcome

Looking back on my second year as Rector of the United Nations University (UNU), I am filled with a sense of accomplishment and renewed purpose. The year was a whirlwind of progress in advancing UNU's mission to tackle today's most pressing global challenges.

A major focus early in the year was development of the *UNU Strategy 2025–2029*. Approved by the UNU Council in June, this document focuses on the three pillars — knowledge, partnerships and

impact — that will guide us through the next five years. The energy and dedication poured into this process by my colleagues reaffirms my confidence in the path we have set.

I would like to highlight an especially noteworthy initiative: the launch of a network of UNU Hubs that will expand and complement the work of UNU's research institutes. Each UNU Hub is a partnership between one or more UNU institutes and a leading university, focusing on critical global

challenges — ranging from urban sustainability and climate adaptation to engineering solutions and water issues — with a particular emphasis on addressing the needs of the Global South.

In 2024, four UNU Hubs were established at leading universities in Canada, Germany, Sweden and the USA, with more planned in the future. These Hubs will integrate research, training and outreach to cultivate future leaders, create opportunities for students and researchers to engage with the UN system, and deliver policy-relevant solutions.

Throughout the year, I shared UNU's research across the globe, speaking with government officials, academics, foundations and industry leaders. I also delivered speeches in support of sustainable development at numerous international conferences, including the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology in Italy, the Conference of the Least Developed Countries in Finland, the UN General Assembly, and the International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance in South Africa.

While such global engagements are important, we are fortunate to be headquartered in Japan — a steadfast supporter of the multilateral system. I met with numerous Japanese government officials, researchers, students and business leaders to increase UNU's visibility and impact, visited 11 prefectures and gave 14 lectures.

Overall, 2024 was a year of remarkable growth and progress for UNU. I am proud of all that we have achieved together, and I look forward to strengthening UNU's contributions towards a sustainable future for all.

Tshilidzi Marwala

Rector of the United Nations University
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations



Tokyo, JAPAN – Rector Marwala hosts a Conversation Series event, one of many public events at UNU Centre in 2024.

Knowledge to Transform the World

At the core of the United Nations University's mission is a commitment to rigorous, policy-relevant research that addresses today's most pressing global challenges. Our goal goes beyond theoretical exploration or "knowledge for the sake of knowledge"; we aim to apply scientific expertise to policymaking, decision-making and public discourse by offering pragmatic, evidence-based insights.

UNU experts conduct holistic research on critical issues related to human survival, development and welfare, translating their findings into recommendations that can help policymakers and practitioners drive positive change.

Through its global network of institutes, UNU engages in international and regional policy arenas, leveraging expertise from multiple disciplines. Our collaborative approach fosters effective partnerships that generate unique insights and practical, replicable solutions, amplifying UNU's global impact.

UNU's work encompasses the full scope of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with each UNU institute focusing on specific topics related to one or more of these themes.

UNU is committed to creating meaningful impact. Some efforts emphasize quick action to address a pressing need, while laying the groundwork for lasting change. Other projects are designed to build resilience over multiple years through education, strategic partnerships and governance reforms. And some initiatives create enduring transformation by addressing structural challenges. By balancing immediate action with long-term vision, UNU makes powerful contributions to a more sustainable world.

With its unique dual identity as an autonomous research and training institution that is a trusted

knowledge partner within the United Nations system, UNU helps shape major policy processes and debates around vital global issues.

Strategic collaborations for greater impact

Interdisciplinary, cross-sector partnerships enable UNU to amplify its contributions to global progress while enhancing its ability to influence policy and address complex governance challenges. In 2024, UNU's collaborative efforts integrated social, economic and environmental priorities, promoting equitable development and innovative solutions.

Highlights of UNU Collaborations and Partnerships

United Nations System Partners



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Education for sustainable development; emerging technologies in higher education; biotechnology; global climate resilience; glacier preservation



United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

Ecosystem-based approaches for disaster risk reduction and climate action; gender-responsive approaches to loss and damage; humanitarian impacts related to climate change



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA)

Local e-government development; climate-resilient social protection; social contracts; higher education sustainability



UN Women

Digital security and gender equality; the women, peace and security agenda



United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (UN PBSO)

Human rights and peacebuilding; climate change impacts; youth engagement in peacebuilding



United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Integrated water and wastewater management; Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework



Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG)

Connecting science and policymaking



United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)

Regional cooperation and integration



World Health Organization (WHO)

Gender-responsive health policies



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Ecosystem restoration; science, technology and innovation



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Data governance; implementation of the Global Digital Compact



United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

AI for achieving SDGs in industry and manufacturing

Regional Organizations

European Union (EU): Environmental and climate change cooperation; strengthening science diplomacy; international development policy and aid financing practices

Asian Development Bank (ADB): Financing social protection reform

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB): Connecting researchers across borders; integrated water and wastewater management

CCRIF SPC (formerly the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility): Climate risk adaptation and insurance

Global Water and Climate Adaptation Centre (ABCD Centre): Water security and global change

Avina Foundation: Locally led climate action and adaptation

UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centres: Green sector innovations and entrepreneurship

Munich Climate Insurance Initiative: Climate risk transfer mechanisms

Okyeman Traditional Authority: Forest degradation

Advancing the Global Goals: What We Do

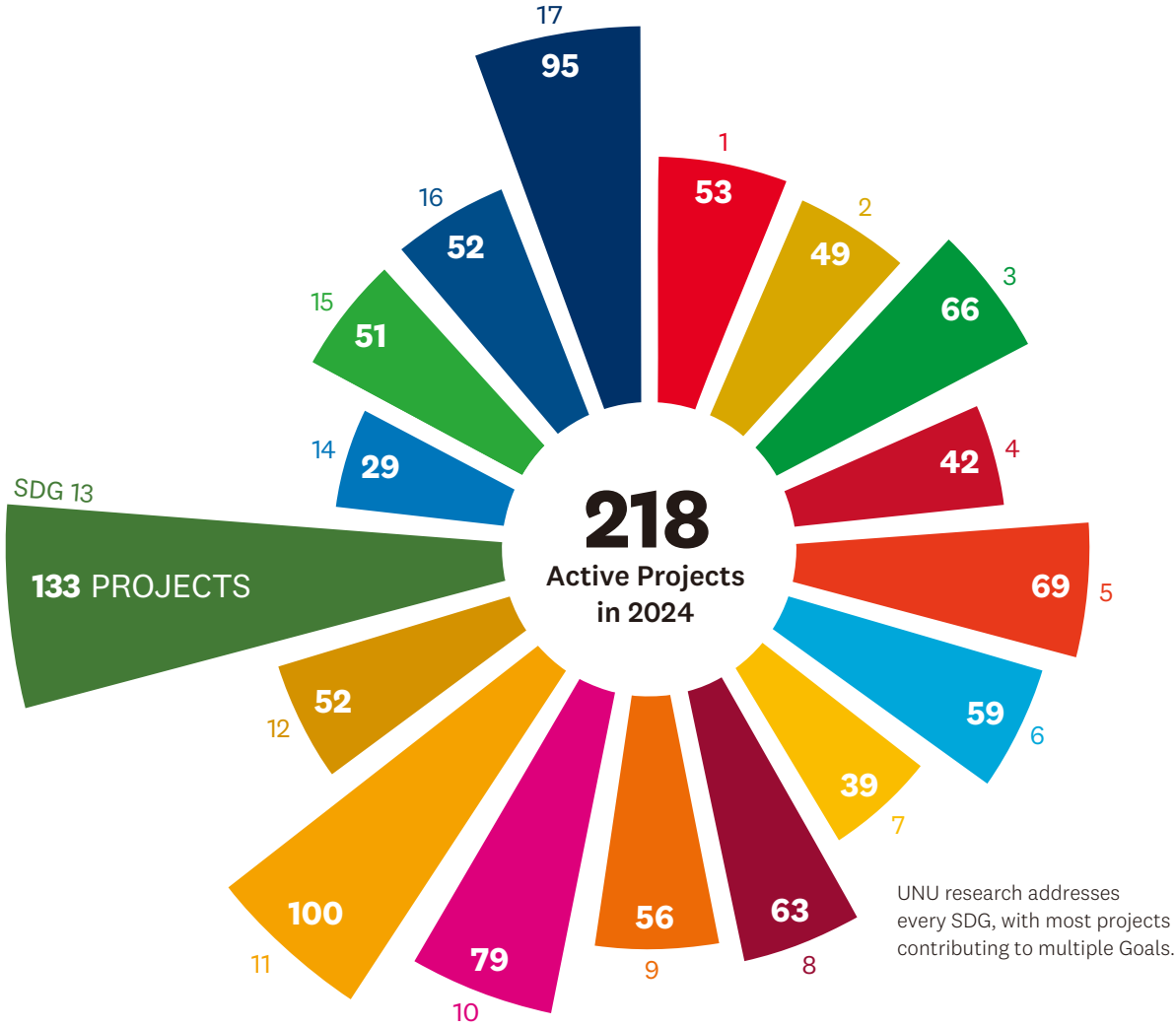
The United Nations University conducts policy-relevant research, delivering new practical solutions to complex global challenges.

UNU’s unique position within the UN system allows it to bridge the gap between research and policy. UNU collaborates extensively with other UN system entities and a global network of external partners — including universities, governments, NGOs and private entities. These collaborations enable UNU to address evolving policy needs by generating evidence-based solutions tailored to these demands. Additionally, UNU’s status as a trusted member of the UN system allows it to undertake politically sensitive work that may be inaccessible to external research institutions.

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lie the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNU addresses each goal individually, while also emphasizing their interdependencies and collective impact. This integrated approach is essential to driving meaningful progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Through its diverse research, capacity-building and knowledge dissemination, amplified through extensive global collaborations, UNU actively promotes sustainable development and contributes to a brighter future.

In the following sections, UNU’s contributions to the SDGs are organized under four overarching categories: **People, Prosperity, Planet,** and **Peace and Partnerships**. While many of UNU’s initiatives intersect with multiple SDGs, each initiative is listed once under the most relevant category for clarity.



Advancing the Global Goals

People

UNU's research addresses the root causes of poverty, hunger, inequality, and limited access to health and education, helping to make lasting, positive change in people's lives.



Quang Nguyen Vinh / Pexels

2024 Highlights

Research projects and initiatives

- Catalysing Policy Improvement in Africa: This UNU-IIGH initiative is helping to strengthen maternal, newborn and reproductive health policies across sub-Saharan Africa by employing an equity-focused, de-colonial approach to improve health outcomes for underserved populations.
- Evaluating the Cost-Effectiveness of WFP Food Assistance in Niger: This UNU-EHS project assessed the impact of climate adaptation investments on food security in drought-sensitive regions of Niger, providing key insights to optimize food aid interventions in response to climate challenges.
- Innovate for Clean Agricultural Technologies: This UNU-INRA project seeks to enhance agricultural productivity and income for smallholder farmers while supporting young (and female) green agritech innovators.
- Local Online Service Index Network: This UNU-EGOV project assessed and sought to enhance local government digital services, including access to online education.
- Mother and Child Cash Transfer Programme: This UNU-MERIT programme supports maternal and child health by providing cash transfers to vulnerable Afghan households, focusing on improving health and resilience in post-conflict areas.
- Power and Accountability: This UNU-IIGH project examines the governance and influence of powerful

- private actors in global health, developing policy recommendations focused on strengthening Global South representation and marginalized voices in health governance frameworks.
- RETO-DOSSO: This UNU-VIE project is demonstrating how a renewable energy (solar) system can not only improve water, electricity and food supplies but also strengthen the local economy in the Dosso region of Niger.
- Strengthening Safety Nets in Post-Conflict and Humanitarian Contexts: This UNU-WIDER project assesses the impact of cash transfer programmes on economic resilience in countries such as Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia, providing evidence to enhance social safety nets in crisis settings.

Publications

- *Advancing Gender Equality in Health: Expanding Voices, Evidence, and Time Horizons for Change* (UNU-IIGH working paper series)
- *Affirmative Action Around the World: Insights From a New Dataset* (UNU-WIDER working paper)
- *Corporate Accountability in Global Health Governance? A Case Study of the Access to Medicine Index* (UNU-IIGH report)
- “Developing an Agenda for the Decolonization of Global Health” (UNU-IIGH article in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*)

- “Missing in Action: A Scoping Review of Gender as the Overlooked Component in Decolonial Discourses” (UNU-IIGH article in *BMJ Global Health*)
- “Quantifying Women in the Water Workforce” (UNU-INWEH article in *Nature Water*)
- *Strengthening Safety Nets in Post-Conflict and Humanitarian Contexts* (UNU-WIDER report)
- “Women’s Work: Routes to Social and Economic Empowerment” (UNU-WIDER special issue of *World Development*)

Events

- Addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence to Safeguard Digital Spaces (UNU-IIGH seminar)
- Advancing the Concept of Global Health (UNU Centre – Tokyo BIG IDEAS dialogue)
- Gendered Workplace Violence in the PHC Workforce Part I - Policy Frameworks for Action (UNU-IIGH webinar)
- Generative AI and Education (UNU Macau webinar)
- Global Citizen NOW Health and Climate Financing (UNU-CPR high-level panel)
- Global Digital Future Forum (UNU Macau)
- Trends and Developments in Global Health in Africa (UNU Centre - Tokyo Conversation Series event)
- What Does a Gender-Just Climate Transition Mean for Health Systems in Africa? (UNU-IIGH webinar)

Education and training

- Agent-Based Modelling for Better Health Policies (UNU Macau summer camp)
- Climate and Health Co-benefits (UNU-IIGH regional workshop)
- Enhancing Gender Integration in Scaled and Sustained Government Health Programmes: Lessons from Nepal, the Philippines and India (UNU-IIGH online course)
- Making Metabolomics Matter: Targeted Approaches for Translational and Precision Medicine (UNU-BIOLAC course)
- New Insights in Dengue and Other Arboviruses: From Molecular Biology to Public Health (UNU-BIOLAC course)
- Training of Trainers to Strengthen Digital Security and Cyber Resilience of Gender Equality and Women’s Rights Advocates (UNU Macau)

Advancing the Global Goals

Prosperity

UNU's research focuses on creating just and resilient economies, fostering social stability and addressing the root causes of inequality and instability.



Johnny Goerend / Unsplash

2024 Highlights

Research projects and initiatives

- **Biotechnology and Development:** This UNU-BIOLAC project builds capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean on such topics as antimicrobial resistance, viral challenges, food security and frugal innovation.
- **Costing Social Protection Reform for Asia and the Pacific:** UNU-MERIT works with the Asian Development Bank to support financing strategies for social protection that can help achieve the SDGs in developing countries.
- **Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking:** Led by UNU-CPR (until July, when it transitioned to UNDP), this initiative has built a network of governments, civil society and financial sector partners to identify illicit proceeds from human exploitation and enhance the capacity to fight human exploitation.
- **Greenovations:** UNU-VIE is helping incubate green startups across Africa, focusing on youth and women-led initiatives in renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture and waste management to drive sustainable development.
- **Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development:** UNU-IAS provides leadership training to help mayors in the Asia-Pacific sustainably develop urban areas.
- **SOUTHMOD:** UNU-WIDER is developing tax-benefit microsimulation models across 13 developing countries, thereby strengthening the capacity of social protection systems to reduce poverty and inequality.

- **Recommendations on the Use of Synthetic Data to Train AI Models:** This UNU Macau project provided guidance on using synthetic data responsibly to address issues such as data scarcity solutions and privacy protection while mitigating risks such as bias, cybersecurity threats and model accuracy concerns.
- **Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development:** UNU-WIDER is collaborating with South African government agencies to support data-driven policies that reduce inequality and promote inclusive growth.
- **National Strategy for Digital Transformation in Guinea-Bissau:** This UNU-EGOV project developed a digital transformation roadmap for public sector modernization aligned with the country's 2030 development goals.

Publications

- *Affirmative Action Around the World: Insights from a New Dataset* (UNU-WIDER working paper)
- *Carbon Markets Economies: Crafting a New Narrative of Opportunity and Sustainable Growth for Climate Action in Africa* (UNU-INRA report)
- *COVID-19 and the Informal Economy: Impact, Recovery and the Future* (UNU-WIDER book)
- *Fostering Renewable Energy Uptake in Caribbean Small Island Developing States: Insights from Barbados* (UNU-IAS policy brief)

- *How Can Urban Governance Better Respond to Climate Risks in the Global South? A Multi-Disciplinary Review* (UNU-CRIS, UNU-EHS and UNU-MERIT working paper)
- *Industrial Strategies for Tackling the Challenges of the 21st Century* (UNU-MERIT report)
- *Labour Market Integration for Refugees: A Social Justice Framework* (UNU-MERIT working paper)
- *Responsible and Inclusive Urban AI: Opportunities and Challenges for Advancing Sustainable Development Goals* (UNU-EGOV science-policy brief)
- *Stranded Assets: Counting the Costs* (UNU-INRA report)
- *The Demand for a Fair International Financial Architecture* (UNU-CPR report)
- *The Green Innovation Ecosystem in Africa* (UNU-VIE report)
- *The Use of Synthetic Data to Train AI Models: Opportunities and Risks for Sustainable Development* (UNU Macau policy brief)

Events

- **AI for All: Bridging Divides, Building a Sustainable Future** (UNU Macau conference)
- **Beyond Economic Losses: Towards a Holistic Approach on Tracking Losses and Damages** (UNU-EHS forum)
- **Renewable Energy Transition in Africa-Europe Relations: Impact of the EU Green Deal** (UNU-VIE conference)
- **Supporting the Recovery of Noto Peninsula** (UNU-IAS symposium)

- **The Billionaire Tax – A (Modest) Proposal for the 21st Century** (UNU-WIDER Annual Lecture)
- **The World at Crossroads – Securing the Future Generations** (UNU-WIDER Development Conference)

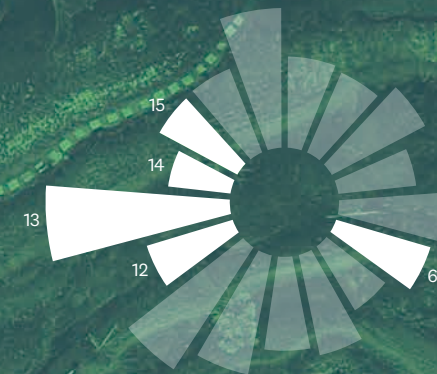
Education and training

- **Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services in Urban Environments** (UNU-IAS short course)
- **Digital Innovation and Transformation Training** (UNU-EGOV)
- **MSC in Science in Public Policy and Human Development** (UNU-MERIT and Maastricht University)
- **Migration Management Diploma Programme for Africa** (UNU-MERIT)
- **Tax-benefit Microsimulation for Global South Countries** (UNU-WIDER online course)
- **PhD in Innovation, Economics and Governance for Development** (UNU-MERIT and Maastricht University)

Advancing the Global Goals

Planet

UNU's research supports responsible resources management, climate action and ecosystem conservation.



Jason Cooper / Unsplash

2024 Highlights

Research projects and initiatives

- Accelerating the Implementation of Water-Related SDGs: The SDG 6 Policy Support System developed by this UNU-INWEH project, and now adopted by more than 60 countries, provides key metrics and guidance to help monitor and achieve water-related SDG targets.
- Analytics, Informatics and Data: UNU-FLORES is developing computational tools and analytical techniques for sustainable management of water, soil, waste, energy and geo-resources.
- Behavioural Adaptation for Water Security and Inclusivity: UNU-INWEH is applying behavioural science to empower communities across Africa with adaptive strategies to meet climate-influenced water security needs.
- Chair for Sustainability and Textile Innovation: UNU-FLORES is partnering with a Bangladeshi university to promote sustainable textile practices that reduce the industry's environmental footprint and support a circular economy.
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Trade Agreements: This UNU-CRIS project evaluates the environmental consequences of trade agreements and provides recommendations to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.
- Water Information Management System: UNU-INWEH is collaboratively developing a system to improve water resources management in the Wider Caribbean Region.

- Global Drought Atlas: UNU-EHS is compiling data on drought risks and adaptation strategies to help policymakers plan resilient responses to drought impacts.
- Global Youth MIDORI Platform: This UNU-IAS project addresses the under-representation of youth in global environmental policy by providing training and opportunities to contribute to biodiversity and environmental decision-making processes.
- International Satoyama Initiative: As secretariat of this initiative, UNU-IAS mobilizes global partnerships for biodiversity and human-nature relationships.
- Loss and Damage in Informal Urban Settlements: UNU-EHS studies climate-related losses in informal urban communities, delivering policy insights to enhance resilience against climate impacts.
- FOREST Okeyama project: This UNU-INRA initiative engages local communities in Ghana to collaboratively combat deforestation through sustainable forest management practices.

Publications

- *Bridging Science and Policy for Integrated Action on Climate and Biodiversity* (UNU-IAS policy brief)
- *Climate Change in Regional Perspective* (UNU-CRIS book)
- "Climate Finance, Debt and Economic Dependency in Africa" (UNU-INRA article on Review of African Political Economy website)
- *Decarbonizing Food Systems through International Food Trade and Post-production Management* (UNU-IAS policy brief)
- *Ecosystem-based Approaches for Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate, Land, and Biodiversity Goals* (UNU-EHS policy brief)
- *Flood Risks in Hue, Central Vietnam: An Assessment of Flood Hazard, Exposures, Vulnerabilities, Root Causes, and Impacts* (UNU-EHS report)
- *Harnessing the Power of AI for Climate Change Impact Assessment* (UNU-INWEH report)
- *Indicators of Resilience in Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes* (UNU-IAS policy brief)
- *Linking Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Loss & Damage* (UNU-IAS book)
- *Scorching Heat and Shrinking Horizons: The Impact of Rising Temperatures on Marriages and Migration in Rural India* (UNU-MERIT working paper)
- *Unmasking the Unseen: The Gendered Impacts of Water Quality, Sanitation and Hygiene* (UNU-INWEH report)

Events

- Bonn AI & Climate Expert Meeting (UNU-EHS)
- Healing Our Land through Science and Earth Intelligence (UNU session at UNCCD COP 16)
- Kwapong Lecture — Green Wins: Fostering a Better Dialogue Towards Sustainable, Inclusive Natural Resource Governance (UNU-INRA)
- Science, Technology and Innovation Day (UNU session at UNCCD COP 16)

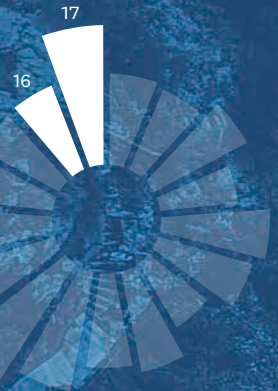
Education and training

- African Academy for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)
- Doctoral School on Asian and Comparative Regionalism (UNU-CRIS)
- Groundwater Resources Assessment and Management (UNU-INWEH online course)
- MSc in Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security (UNU-EHS and University of Bonn)
- MSc in Sustainability (UNU-IAS)
- Natural Resource Management Leadership for Climate Change (UNU-INRA short course)
- PhD in Integrated Management of Water, Soil, and Waste (UNU-FLORES and Technische Universität Dresden)
- PhD in Sustainability Science (UNU-IAS)

Advancing the Global Goals

Peace & Partnerships

UNU advances innovative solutions to strengthen governance systems and brings together diverse stakeholders to foster knowledge exchange.



Geranimo / Unsplash

2024 Highlights

Research projects and initiatives

- A Breakthrough for People and Planet: This UNU-CPR project examined the role of human rights tools in advancing global peacebuilding and developed the recommendations in the advisory report of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, a key Summit of the Future negotiation document.
- Accelerating Environmental Collaboration through the United Nations Environment Management Group: UNU-INWEH is part of a collaborative effort highlighting complementarities and interlinkages between the UN System Common Approach for transitioning to a pollution-free planet and the Global Framework on Chemicals.
- Digital Government Assessment Programme: UNU-EGOV supported Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 by developing a comprehensive framework for evaluating and enhancing the digital services of 20 key government entities.
- Portugal EGOV Index: UNU-EGOV is collaborating with a Portuguese government agency to enhance the nation's digital governance and advance transparent and inclusive institutions.
- Women, Peace and Cybersecurity: This UNU Macau initiative seeks to empower women as key contributors to peace and security in digital spaces.

- GDC Data Deep Dive: UNU-CPR and UNU-EGOV collaborated with the UN Economic Commission for Africa, African experts and government officials to explore how the Global Digital Compact Zero Draft can contribute to a digital governance framework for Africa.
- Gendered Implications of AI on the Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Southeast Asia: This UNU Macau project explores how advancements in artificial intelligence affect gender dynamics, security and peacebuilding for women.
- PBF Thematic Review: UNU-CPR examined 92 initiatives supported by the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund between 2017 and 2022 to identify best practices and derive lessons about synergies between human rights and peacebuilding.
- Regional Cooperation and Integration: This UNU-CRIS project delivered a groundbreaking handbook that provides comprehensive cross-policy analyses of regional cooperation across multiple domains including migration, trade, security and education.
- UNU-INWEH-Tajikistan Agreement: UNU-INWEH is partnering with the Republic of Tajikistan to foster academic and scientific collaboration on issues of water security and climate change.

Publications

- *Assembly for Peace: A Digital Handbook on the UN General Assembly's Past Practice on Peace and Security* (UNU-CPR)
- *Citizen-centered Digital Government: Approaches for Advancing the Public Sector's Use of Technologies Based on Demand-side Data* (UNU-CRIS policy brief)
- *Cybersecurity Threats, Vulnerabilities and Resilience Among Women Human Rights Defenders and Civil Society in South-East Asia* (UNU Macau report)
- *Digital Governance Readiness in West Africa* (UNU-EGOV report)
- *Global Health Governance and the Challenge of Holding Power to Account* (UNU-IIGH working paper)
- "Governing in the Digital Age: The Emergence of Dynamic Smart Urban Governance Modes" (UNU-EGOV article in *Government Information Quarterly*)
- *Localising the Sustainable Development Goals: Needs and Challenges* (UNU-CRIS report)
- *Taxing Top Incomes in the Emerging World: Economic Impact Under the Microscope* (UNU-WIDER working paper)
- *UN Peace Operations and Human Rights* (UNU-CPR report)

Events

- Defining the Paradiplomacy Research Agenda (UNU-CRIS roundtable)
- Improving Local Online Service Delivery in a Global World (UNU-EGOV forum)
- Managing Shocks: Connecting Regional and Global Responses Past and Present (UNU-CRIS workshop)
- South and East Africa Digital Governance Forum (UNU-EGOV)
- Trust and Ethical Digital Governance for the World We Want (International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance; UNU-EGOV)
- UN Peace Operations and Human Rights in Conflict Settings (UNU-CPR workshop)

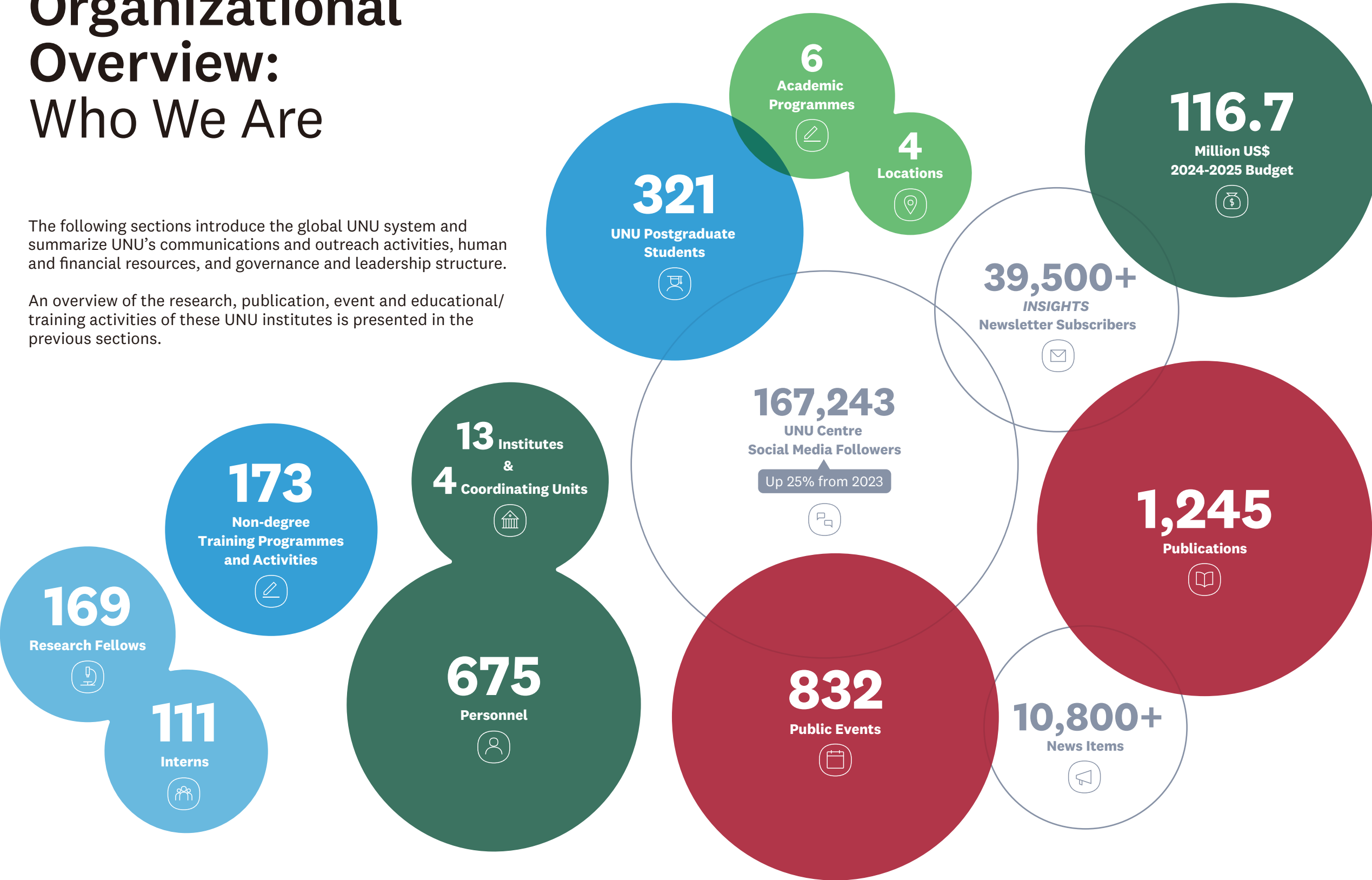
Education and training

- Digital Innovation and Transformation Training for LLDCs and LDCs (UNU-EGOV course)
- Digital Technology and Sustainable Development Talent Programme Summer Camp (UNU Macau)
- School of Modern Diplomacy (UNU-CRIS)
- Summer School: Catalyzing the Digital Future (UNU-MERIT)
- UGlobe Erasmus Exchange Programme on Just Transitions (UNU-INRA)

Organizational Overview: Who We Are

The following sections introduce the global UNU system and summarize UNU’s communications and outreach activities, human and financial resources, and governance and leadership structure.

An overview of the research, publication, event and educational/training activities of these UNU institutes is presented in the previous sections.



Organizational Overview

The UNU System

UNU operates as a network of 13 institutes located in 12 countries, each of which has a specific focus as mandated by its statute and host country agreement. The global UNU system is coordinated by UNU Centre with its headquarters in Tokyo.

★ UNU Centre

- **UNU Centre — Tokyo** (Japan) serves as the programming, planning and administrative headquarters unit of the University, comprising the Office of the Rector, Administration and Financial Services units, the Campus Computing Centre, and the Office of Communications.
- **UNU Centre — Putrajaya** (Malaysia) operates as an adjunct administrative, human resources and financial services unit.
- **UNU-VIE** (the UNU Vice-Rectorate in Europe; Bonn, Germany) supports the University's institutional development, coordinates joint activities and networks, and facilitates collaboration with UN agencies in Bonn and regional stakeholders.
- **UNU Paris Office** — In March, UNU reopened a small office in Paris to enhance collaboration with UNESCO and other EU research and development institutions.

2 UNU-BIOLAC — The UNU Biotechnology Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (Caracas, Venezuela) promotes the use of biotechnology for sustainable development, focusing on training and capacity building.

3 UNU-CPR — The UNU Centre for Policy Research (New York, NY, USA) generates innovative solutions to global public policy challenges and actively contributes to policy debates at the United Nations, representing the UNU system at UN headquarters.

4 UNU-CRIS — The UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (Bruges, Belgium) focuses on governance, cooperation and integration both within and between regions.

5 UNU-EGOV — The UNU Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (Guimarães, Portugal) works at the intersection of governance, technology and development.

6 UNU-EHS — The UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (Bonn, Germany) addresses the challenges of global environmental change, with a focus on vulnerability driven by environmental factors and climate adaptation to manage ecological and societal risks.

7 UNU-FLORES — The UNU Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (Dresden, Germany) contributes to the sustainable use and integrated management of environmental resources, particularly water, soil and waste.

8 UNU-IAS — The UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (Tokyo, Japan) supports efforts to achieve a more sustainable future by focusing on transformations toward sustainable societies, natural capital and biodiversity, and global change and resilience.

9 UNU-IIGH — The UNU International Institute for Global Health (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) advances evidence-based policy on key health issues, focusing on gender mainstreaming in health systems, digital health and accountability in health policy.

10 UNU-INRA — The UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (Accra, Ghana) provides cutting-edge knowledge about sustainable responses to Africa's natural resources management challenges.

11 UNU-INWEH — The UNU Institute for Water, Environment and Health (Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada) analyses and synthesizes existing knowledge on water challenges, identifies emerging policy issues and develops scalable solutions.

12
Countries

13
Institutes

- ★ ADMINISTRATIVE & ACADEMIC SERVICE UNIT
- INSTITUTE
- INSTITUTE WITH POSTGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMME
- ◆ OPERATING UNIT
- UNU HUB — 4 LOCATIONS

Organizational Overview

Communicating & Engaging for Impact

UNU expands its reach and amplifies the impact of its work by disseminating knowledge, insights and expertise through diverse and dynamic channels, including publications, events, specialized training, high-level briefings and digital engagement.

Sharing knowledge — UNU disseminates its research and insights through a wide range of publications, including peer-reviewed articles, reports, policy briefs, working papers, books and features in online media outlets. This enables UNU to reach a diverse audience, encompassing academics, professionals, policymakers and directly affected communities as well as the general public. More than 8,700 UNU publications (including over 350 published in 2024) can be downloaded free-of-charge through the online UNU Collections repository.

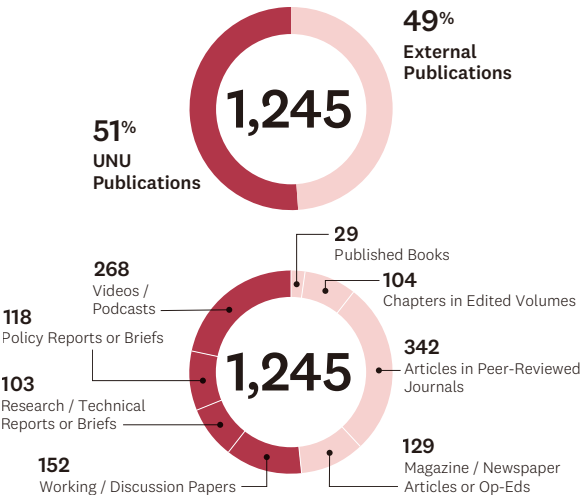
Fostering global conversations — Through conferences, seminars, symposiums, and other events, UNU convenes experts, policymakers and practitioners to address critical global challenges.

Building leadership capacity — UNU’s postgraduate MSc and PhD degree programmes and non-degree training opportunities empower future leaders to address complex global issues. Specialized training programmes offered by the UNU institutes provide practical skills to thousands of participants globally, advancing equitable development and inclusive education.

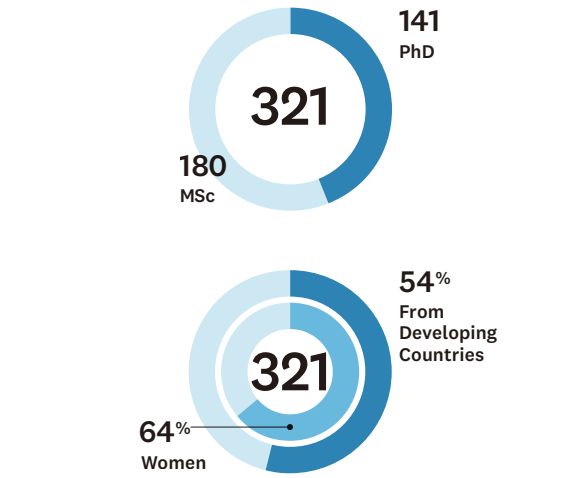
Shaping policy discourse — In 2024, UNU reinforced its role as a key advisor in global policymaking. By providing evidence-based briefings to intergovernmental bodies and other key stakeholders, UNU influenced critical discussions on topics such as global governance reform, peacebuilding and sustainable development. UNU’s contributions informed high-level dialogues, helping to shape policies on frontier issues. Because it is located near UN Headquarters, UNU-CPR is particularly active in briefing key UN system audiences and government officials on UNU’s latest research findings.

Enhancing global engagement — UNU amplifies its global visibility through digital platforms, newspapers, social networks and digital newsletters. In 2024, UNU continued to strengthen its online presence through an expanded and integrated web platform that now encompasses nearly all UNU institutes to provide a centralized access point for UNU news, research, publications and other resources. Through these media, UNU extends its reach, connecting with audiences worldwide to ensure that its research and initiatives gain greater traction.

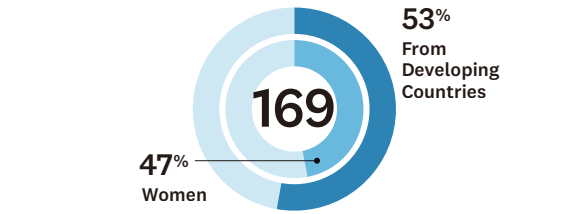
Publications



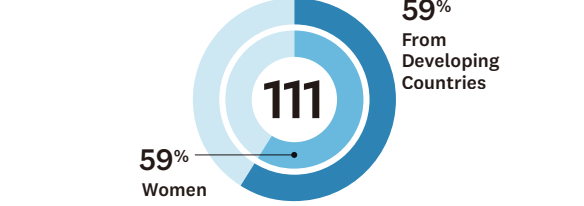
Postgraduate Students



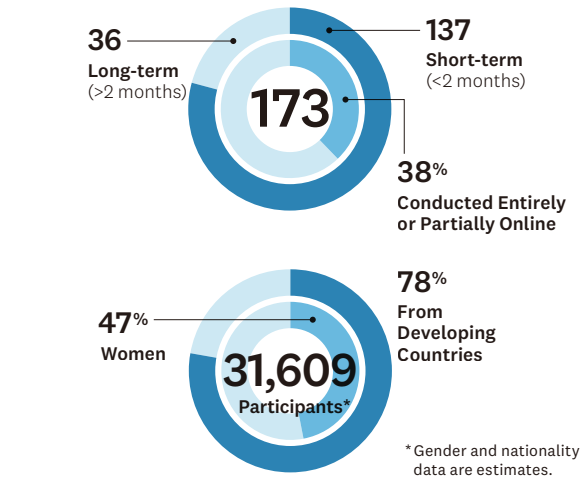
Research Fellows



Interns



Non-degree Training Programmes and Activities



Organizational Overview

Human & Financial Resources

Personnel — The University’s personnel include Professional and General Service staff (appointed in accordance with UN Staff Regulations and Rules) as well as visiting scholars, research associates, postdoctoral fellows, administrative and academic services personnel, and specialized consultants. As of year-end 2024, the global UNU system had a personnel complement of 675 (of whom 45% were developing country nationals and 51% were women).

UNU is an inclusive employer committed to maintaining an accessible and enabling workplace that embraces diversity, respects individual (racial, cultural, sexual and other) differences and is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and abuse.

UNU strives to achieve gender parity. In 2024, UNU continued to “outperform the Training Institutes entities and the overall UN System” on gender-related indicators, as detailed in the most recent analysis of the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (UN-SWAP). The Executive

Director of UN Women commended UNU for enhancing gender mainstreaming in research, strengthening engagement of senior leadership on gender and diversity, and communicating on gender and diversity both internally and externally.

Finances — UNU receives no funds from the regular UN budget. The University is funded entirely through voluntary contributions in the form of institutional funding (primarily recurring host country contributions and investment income derived from the UNU Endowment Fund) and contributions (from UN Member States, foundations, agencies, international organizations and other sources) designated for specific research projects. UNU is committed to transparency and accountability in financial management and directs its financial resources in line with its strategic priorities and in service of its global mandate.

Budget — The approved budget for the 2024–2025 biennium is US\$116.7 million.

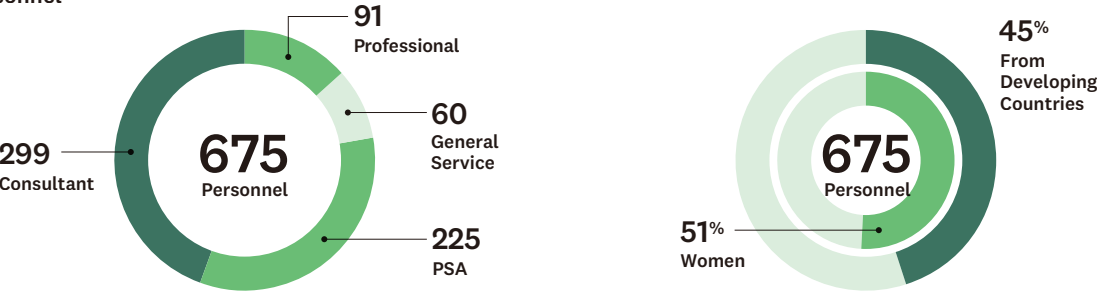
Contributions Received by UNU
1 January — 31 December 2024

MEMBER STATES	US Dollars*
Belgium	1,161,067
Bulgaria	15,000
Canada	1,460,920
European Union (European Commission)	1,317,268
Finland	2,534,237
Germany	8,779,326
Japan	4,207,416
Korea, Republic of	74,437
Macau S.A.R.	284,368
Netherlands	1,316,645
Norway	2,832,014
Portugal	2,431,106
South Africa	542,746
Switzerland	1,920,985
United Kingdom	648,642
Subtotal	29,526,178
OTHER CONTRIBUTORS	
AEON Environmental Foundation	60,977
Asian Development Bank, Manila	225,339
Bischöfliches Hilfswerk Misereor e.V.	58,945
CIMA Research Foundation	82,590
Cornell University	30,000
Coventry University	35,308
Eurac Research	414,634
European Investment Bank (EIB)	68,126
Farmer’s Market Association (FMA)	117,077
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	31,200
GIZ GmbH	3,340,378
Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.	38,990
Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	29,056
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)	728,416
International Labour Organization (ILO)	26,625
Ishikawa Prefecture	164,232
Japan Foundation for UNU (JFUNU)	109,192
Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)	93,341
Kanazawa City	163,218
Karlsruher Institut fuer Technologie	47,851
Maastricht City Council	334,001
Maastricht University, INSPIRE	454,672
Munich Climate Insurance Initiative (MCII)	288,565
Munich Re Foundation	39,861

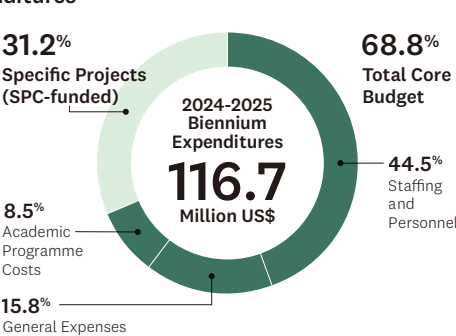
* Contribution figures are converted to US dollar equivalents and rounded to the nearest dollar; subtotals may reflect rounding approximations.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	25,000
OroVerde Tropical Forest Foundation-OroVerde	220,870
Resona Holdings, Inc	37,638
Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH	116,537
Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	103,558
Stiftelsen Future Earth Sverig	58,853
Stiftelsen Global Challenges Foundation	119,980
Technische Universitaet Dresden (TU Dresden)	95,648
The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)	67,379
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	103,964
United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UN-DPPA)	146,729
United Nations Development Programme Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)	337,663
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	79,411
United Nations Environment Management Group (UN EMG)	79,017
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	91,000
United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI)	365,803
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	335,761
United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)	110,000
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)	1,377,014
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	701,600
United States Institute of Peace (USIP)	87,419
Universiteit Gent	71,102
University of Copenhagen	141,842
Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)	130,152
WaterAid Canada	103,916
West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL)	91,202
World Food Programme (WFP)	119,966
Zukunft-Umwelt-Gesellschaft GmbH-ZUG	363,859
(36 other donors with individual contributions of less than US\$20,000)	188,091
Subtotal	12,853,568
Total	42,379,746

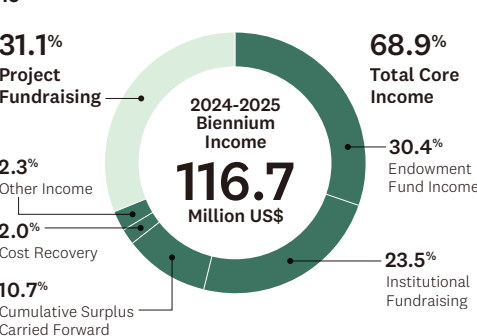
Personnel



Expenditures



Income



Organizational Overview

Governance & Leadership

UNU's operations and academic activities are guided by an integrated governance structure that covers the UNU system and its individual institutes.

System-level stewardship

The Council of the United Nations University oversees the affairs of the global UNU system. This 16-member Council comprises 12 appointed members, the UNU Rector and three ex officio members (the UN Secretary-General, UNESCO Director-General and UNITAR Executive Director). The UNU Council provides strategic guidance, approving the University's work programme and budget, and sets systemwide policies. In 2024, the UNU Council convened in Tokyo for its 81st session (June) and its 82nd session (December).

The UNU Rectorate provides day-to-day coordination and direction of the UNU system. Led by the Rector, who holds the rank of UN Under-Secretary-General, the Rectorate ensures integrated academic and administrative leadership across UNU's network of institutes.

UNU Administration handles the development of unified standards, financial and budget reporting, and provision

of human resources, financial and procurement services across the global UNU system.

Institute-level administration

Each UNU institute is led by a Director who oversees the institute's operational management, spanning budget, human resources, and academic and research activities. The Directors meet annually at a Conference of Directors (CONDIR) and periodically through virtual calls to discuss inter-institute coordination and policy.

Advisory Boards/Committees (typically comprising three or more appointed members plus the UNU Rector and institute Director) provide expert guidance on thematic programming and management of their respective institutes.

External oversight

United Nations system bodies that play an oversight role for UNU include the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Board of Auditors, and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

UNU Council 2024

APPOINTED MEMBERS

- **Prof. 'Funmi Olonisakin** (United Kingdom) — UNU Council Chair; Vice-President & Vice-Principal International and Professor of Security, Leadership & Development, King's College London
- **Ms. Yamini Aiyar** (India) — Public Policy Scholar; former President of the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi
- **Prof. Sir Hilary Beckles** (Barbados) — Vice-Chancellor, The University of the West Indies
- **Dr. Denisa Čiderová** (Slovakia) — Associate Professor, Department of International Trade and Liaison for Idea Puzzle, University of Economics in Bratislav
- **Dr. Comfort Ero** (United Kingdom) — President and CEO, International Crisis Group
- **Dr. Xin Fang** (China) — Professor, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences
- **Prof. Adam Habib** (South Africa) — Director, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London
- **Prof. Catherine Kyobutungi** (Uganda) — Executive Director, The African Population and Health Research Center
- **Amb. Kuni Sato** (Japan) — Advisor, East Japan Railway Trading Co., Ltd.; Advisor, National Institutes for Cultural Heritage
- **Dr. Vanessa Scherrer** (France) — Chief Executive Officer, the National Foundation, the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris
- **Dr. Mónica Serrano** (Mexico) — Research Professor, Centre for International Studies, El Colegio de México
- **Prof. Brenda Yeoh** (Singapore) — Raffles Professor of Social Sciences, National University of Singapore

EX OFFICIO COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Rector of UNU
- Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Director-General of UNESCO
- Executive Director of UNITAR

UNU Rectorate

- Rector **Tshilidzi Marwala**
- Senior Vice-Rector **Sawako Shirahase**
- Vice-Rector in Europe **Shen Xiaomeng**
- Executive Officer **Sabine Becker-Thierry**

UNU Administration

- Director of Administration **Joan Sawe**

UNU Institute Directors

- UNU-BIOLAC Programme Coordinator **Gustavo Fermin**
- UNU-CPR Executive Director **David Passarelli**
- UNU-CRIS Director **Philippe De Lombaerde**
- UNU-EGOV Head **Delfina Soares**
- UNU-EHS Director **Shen Xiaomeng**
- UNU-FLORES Director **Edeltraud Günther**
- UNU-IAS Director **Shinobu Yamaguchi**
- UNU-IIGH Director **Rajat Khosla** (through 15 May)
- UNU-IIGH Interim Director **Unni Krishnan Karunakara** (from 15 May)
- UNU-INRA Director **Fatima Denton**
- UNU-INWEH Director **Kaveh Madani**
- UNU Macau Director **Jingbo Huang**
- UNU-MERIT Director **Bartel Van De Walle** (through 13 May)
- UNU-MERIT Interim Director **Clemens Kool** (from 14 May)
- UNU-WIDER Director **Kunal Sen**

