

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



FOREWORD

The year 2025 was a year of preparing for the future of the network. UniPID coordination unit undertook lengthy preparations for the University of Eastern Finland to take over the network coordination after the University of Helsinki. The preparations entailed discussions on processes related to the transfer of network activities, communications, projects, budget, and staff. With a year drawing to a close, substantial efforts enabled a smooth transition for the coordination to start its operations at the University of Eastern Finland. UniPID also initiated a strategy process, involving internal and external stakeholders to a feedback process to shape the future of UniPID for 2026–2030.

During the year 2025, UniPID was visible and active in collaborating with various stakeholders for development and equity in joint efforts. Following the approval of a roadmap for mainstreaming and disseminating the Ethical guidelines for responsible academic partnerships with the Global South in 2024, UniPID wrote discussion papers, organised and attended a series of events and connected with several actors involved in similar efforts for collaborations to support the dissemination. These activities comprised embarking on conversations with many familiar and new partners in the Finnish scientific community and beyond, including foundations, funders, CSOs and sister organisations on higher education policy, internationalisation and research ethics.

In education support, UniPID partnered with a sister network Southern African Nordic Centre and its four member institutions and was able to secure funding to initiate a Team Finland Knowledge programme project Globus for creating virtual courses to the UniPID Virtual Studies catalogue.

In 2025, the 'Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation' (CEA-FIRST) consolidated its foundational phase and advanced the operationalisation of a fully functional AU–EU International Research Consortium (IRC-FNSSA) platform, establishing governance structures, endorsing a long-term Strategy and Operational Plan, and launching pilot-phase services to strengthen equitable and sustainable research and innovation cooperation between Africa and Europe on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture in line with the EU Farm-to-Fork Agenda.

In this annual report, you can review the width of virtual courses, project work, events, communications and policy dialogue that we have engaged with nationally and internationally during the past year. We look forward to working with you towards common goals in 2026!

The UniPID Coordination Unit



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Member university engagement and strategic development

The UniPID Board met four times during 2025. The annual Board Planning Day was organized at the University of Eastern Finland on 19-20 May, hosted by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies. The Planning Days comprised three sessions: The first focused on the UniPID strategy 2026–2030, while the second was the second Board meeting of the year, and the third session focused on brainstorming and planning the UniPID annual seminar to be held during the autumn 2025.

This year, the board's Working Groups selected new Virtual Studies courses, supported in planning UniPID's ethical guidelines' dissemination, and evaluated UniPID's external funding applications and oversaw UniPID's participation in externally funded, ongoing projects. An ad-hoc Working Group was set up to support in the process of preparing for the UniPID strategy 2026–2030.

UniPID maintained an active dialogue with the member universities that coordinated the Global networks, with the aim of exploring and benchmarking opportunities for joint actions. UniPID also continued to collaborate and organise joint events with member universities' networks and sustainability activities in 2025.

1.2 Education support

UniPID offered 13 virtual courses in 2025, three of which were delivered twice during the year, namely: Essentials in Development Studies (MOOC), Gender, Conflict, and Development in the Global South, and Migrant Pedagogy in the Era of Global Displacement. In total, this resulted in 16 course deliveries throughout the year. The Call for Course Proposals 2025 attracted 13 applications, from which three new courses were selected for inclusion in the UniPID Virtual Studies Programme.

For the Master's Award in Development Studies 2025, 33 students from eight member universities submitted their theses for consideration. Of these, 25 theses were accepted for evaluation.

Additionally, the annual teacher's workshop was held in May, this year with a focus on strengthening teaching practices within the UniPID Virtual Studies Programme. In 2025, UniPID also received funding through the Team Finland Knowledge Programme to coordinate, in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland, the project "Virtual Studies for Global Sustainable Development in Southern African Collaboration" (GLOBUS). The project, developed jointly with Finnish and Southern African universities, aims to strengthen partnerships in the field of global development studies, and to co-design and co-implement courses to be introduced in the UniPID Virtual Studies Programme.

1.3 Research support

UniPID organised and contributed to a series of events to disseminate and raise awareness on the Ethical Guidelines for Responsible Academic Partnerships with the Global South and key areas of change, in line with the roadmap for dissemination and outreach.

The network kept on engaging as a mediator and facilitator within the European Union's long-term partnership with Africa framework, specifically strengthening cooperation in research and innovation on renewable energy, and food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

UniPID organized a workshop for members of the Doctoral Network (DocNet), which also welcomed participants from the Sustainability Transformations Doctoral Education Pilot (SusTra). The workshop was held in conjunction with the Development Days Conference 2025, where PhD researchers and supervisors were invited to reflect on and discuss methods, fieldwork practices, and ethical considerations when conducting research in collaboration with partners in the Global South.

In addition to this workshop, UniPID organized its annual webinar, "Equitable Practices in Research Co-Authorship Across Continents." The theme was selected based on feedback from DocNet members, who highlighted the need for training and a dedicated space to reflect on fairer co-authorship practices. Consequently, the event invitation was extended to all DocNet members who found the topic of their interest.



1.4 Policy dialogue and societal impact

The Development Policy Studies mechanism, a joint initiative between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and UniPID came to an end after the third two-year period of studies (6 years in total).

The network took part in a number of national policy dialogue processes and activities in 2025 through contributing to the national coordination group on education in developing countries, through its representatives in the Development Policy Committee and policy dialogue events organised in collaboration with the Finnish Society for Development Research. UniPID also acts as an active observer member in the Scholars at Risk Finland section.

Internationally, UniPID's policy work focused on the AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology, and Innovation and its Research and Innovation Partnerships on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change and Sustainable Energy.

The network maintained an active social media presence, with LinkedIn serving as the primary platform for engaging audiences in UniPID's activities and events. In addition, UniPID began exploring audience engagement on two new channels: Instagram and BlueSky, with the aim of reaching and interacting with more diverse audiences.

1.5 2025 in numbers

VIRTUAL STUDIES

- 13 Virtual courses
- 7 Hosting Universities
- 1 MOOC Course
- 238 Course completions
- 3 New courses funded

SOCIETAL ENGAGEMENT

- 11 Newsletters
- 6360 Website users
- 1685 Facebook followers
- 2541 LinkedIn

RESEARCH SUPPORT AND POLICY DIALOGUE

- 4 External funding applications
- 2 H2020/Europe active projects
- 1 commissioned study

2 Member university engagement and strategic development

UniPID is a network of Finnish universities*, established in 2002 to strengthen the integration of global responsibility and Global South perspectives in universities' interdisciplinary education, research, and societal impact activities. UniPID also promotes universities' international partnerships in support of sustainable development pathways.

According to the network agreement, there is a rotation in UniPID's coordination among member universities. The year 2025 marked the fifth and final year for the University of Helsinki as the coordinating institution. The University of Eastern Finland prepared to take over the coordination and engaged in a transition process with the coordination unit throughout 2025, with several meetings and parallel processes to guarantee a successful transition for the core network activities, ongoing projects, personnel, communications and finances, and to maintain institutional memory and archives.

The network's core budget is based on annual fees paid by member universities and the expenditures totalled 172 000 € in 2025. In addition, UniPID coordinated and implemented a great variety of project activities with funding from Horizon Europe and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Member universities:

*Aalto University, Hanken School of Economics, Tampere University, University of Eastern Finland, University of Helsinki, University of Jyväskylä, University of Lapland, University of Oulu, University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University.



2.1 Board meetings

The UniPID Board held four meetings in 2025. Member universities' representation was comprehensive and remained active throughout the year. Two meetings were held online, and two were held in a hybrid format; online via Zoom and in person at the University of Eastern Finland during the Planning Days and at Tampere University.

Meeting platform	Date	Board members present	Represented member universities	Represented observer members
Zoom	20.3.2025	15	10	2
Zoom/University of Eastern Finland	20.5.2025	14	10	2
Zoom	10.9.2025	19	10	2
Zoom/Tampere University	8.12.2025	15	10	1

2.2 Planning days 2025

The annual UniPID Planning Days is the most important Board activity of the year, as it has become the space where all member universities co-create on timely topics and activities to advance the goals of the network.

In 2025, the Planning Days were organized on 19-20 May at the University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu Campus. The Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies that has committed to hosting the UniPID Coordination Unit as of 2026 welcomed the Board to the Campus, Vice Dean for Education, Minna Tanskanen, gave an overview of the Faculty and Head of the Department of Historical, and Geographical Studies Pieter Dhondt introduced the Department. Marko Junkkarinen, head of administration at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Business studies was also present to welcome the Board. The Planning Days gathered representatives from 8 member universities, 2 observer members representatives and the UniPID coordination unit.

The first day was devoted to a strategy development session. It consisted of a recap of the strategy process actions so far, external stakeholder feedback and analysis, breakout sessions discussing the draft strategy and external stakeholder views and needs, and finally, a foresight exercise facilitated by Osku Haapasaari from the Finland Futures Research Centre at the University of Turku.

The second day started off with a UniPID Board meeting that was held in a hybrid mode. The last session of the Planning Days was devoted to discussing the proposed plan for UniPID Annual Seminar 2025.

The process for developing the UniPID 2026-2030 strategy included a situational analysis, stakeholder feedback from both internal and external stakeholders, review of the monitoring and evaluation indicators and data gathering. An ad hoc strategy working group was set up in December 2024 for drafting the strategy. This working group planned and implemented an external and internal stakeholder strategy survey in March-April 2025 and organized an extraordinary Board strategy workshop in April, during which an analysis of the member university strategies, student feedback report and virtual studies and DocNet feedback was shared and initial survey results presented.

During the Planning Days first session, a summary of the strategy work was presented, followed by an overview of current national and EU strategies, including Finland's Africa strategy, Report on International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation, and the recommendations of the universities' Global networks funded during the universities' performance period 2021-2024. The draft strategy was discussed in facilitated small groups, while the feedback was recorded in Padlet. Lastly, a foresight exercise guided by Osku Haapasaari, Finland Futures Research Centre, a UniPID Board member, introduced the Board members with the futures table tool for creating alternative images of the future. The potential future scenarios feeding into the work of the Strategy working group for finalizing the strategy draft.

In the second part of the Planning Days, the Coordination Unit presented a concept idea for the the UniPID annual seminar 2025. A suggestion was made to organize a series of online workshops/sessions hosted by member universities, observer members and partner institutions on UniPID priority areas where there are common interests. The proposal was to foster shared ownership and collaboration within the network and propose a decentralized event model with a common them, a working group for coordination and invitations for contributions. The Board members felt that already existing events hosted by member universities would create a good space for UniPID contributions. A number of upcoming events were highlighted, including a joint event with INAR (Helsinki Institute of Atmospheric Science), the SDG4 seminar in Jyväskylä, sustainability conference hosted by the University of Eastern Finland, the UEF Global development day in November and the SusTra seminar at Aalto University.



2.3 Working group activities

The UniPID Board convenes working groups to support the implementation of the network's strategic priorities and guide its activities throughout the year.

In 2025, the Virtual Studies Working Group met twice. In the spring meeting, the group evaluated the proposals submitted to the annual call and selected the courses to be funded for the 2025–2026 academic year. A second meeting was held in the autumn to discuss the TFK-funded project, GLOBUS, and its implications for the Virtual Studies Programme in the upcoming academic year.

Additionally, in autumn, the Virtual Studies Working Group and the student services offices at member universities met with the Coordination Unit to receive an introduction to the national cross-institutional study system (RIPA) and to discuss their expected impact on the UniPID Virtual Studies Programme. RIPA is planned to be integrated into UniPID's ways of working starting in the 2026–2027 academic year.

The projects working group supports UniPID's participation in externally funded projects. The projects working group convened in March to discuss the overall outlook on external funding, past project proposals, potential new calls for funding and plans for funding proposals. The projects working group was consulted again in April when preparing a funding proposal for the Team Finland Knowledge programme and two Horizon Europe proposals for continuing AU-EU STI collaboration in the thematic area of food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. The projects working group supported the applications and gave their recommendations and suggestions related to their scope and partnerships. The Team Finland Knowledge programme proposal Virtual Studies for Global Sustainable Development in Southern African collaboration – Globus received a positive funding decision in June 2025. Two proposals were submitted to the Cluster 6 Horizon Europe calls in September 2025, one of which was approved for funding. Please see further details on the submitted proposals in the section 2.4.

Though the Ethical Guidelines Working Group was consolidated into a permanent working group in 2024 and a roadmap was created for further dissemination and outreach, external funding was not secured for this initiative. Hence, the focus has been of dissemination and outreach through events in collaboration with national and international stakeholders.

A joint working group with the Finnish Society for Development Research (FSDR) collaborated throughout the year to plan and organize the activities and events held during the Development Days Conference. As a result, the first DocShop of the year, as well as the Master's Award selection, evaluation, and award ceremony, are planned in close cooperation with FSDR. Regular meetings and ongoing communication support this collaboration.

The UniPID Doctoral Network (DocNet) working group met in spring 2025 to discuss future activities for the network and to review feedback from DocNet members regarding the types of activities and engagement they would find most beneficial. The meeting concluded with a set of proposed next steps and a list of potential themes for future events.

2.4. Funding applications

UniPID Coordination Unit applied to four different calls in 2025:

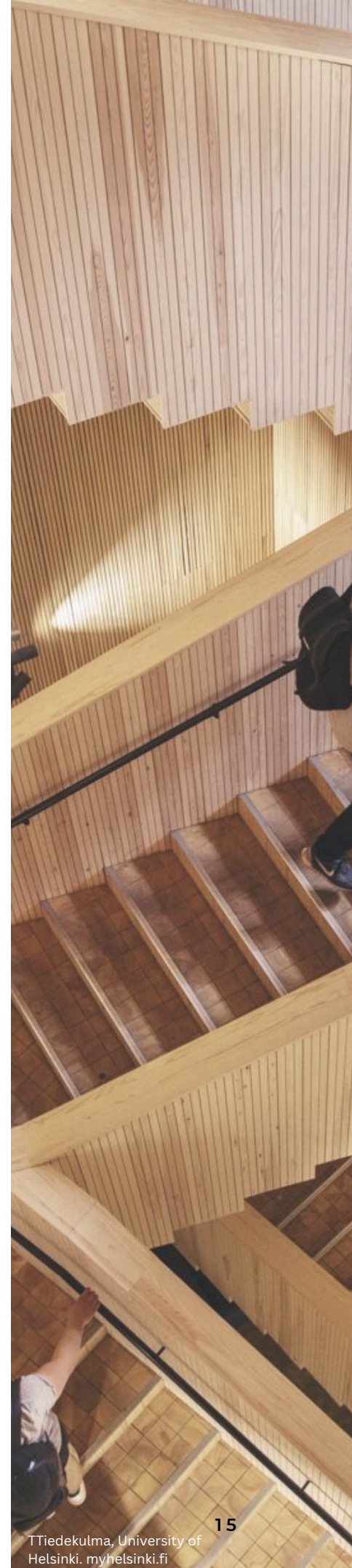
In February, the coordination unit resubmitted an Erasmus+ Higher Education Capacity Building project proposal with partners from Colombia, Mexico and Spain. The proposal focused on strengthening the capacity of higher education institutions in Colombia and Mexico to provide inclusive, high-quality digital education, particularly for students with fewer opportunities, including those from rural and ethnic minority communities. By enhancing digital and intercultural skills, developing inclusive teaching protocols, and fostering international collaboration, the project aims to bridge the technological gap, reduce inequalities in education, and support the preservation of local cultures. The proposal was first submitted in 2024, but did not make it to the shortlist.

In the 2025 resubmission, the proposal received a higher score than the previous year and was placed on a reserve list. However, no funding became available to initiate the project.

In April, the coordination unit submitted a proposal to the Team Finland Knowledge Programme with UniPID in a coordinating role. The proposal brought together four UniPID member institutions, the University of Eastern Finland, Tampere University, the University of Turku and the University of Oulu; and four institutions from the Southern African-Nordic Centre, namely, the University of the Western Cape, Stellenbosch University and Durban University of Technology from South Africa, and the University of Namibia. The proposal aimed at increasing collaborations between UniPID and SANORD network-to-network level and between member institutions for co-developing Virtual Studies based on the Collaborative International Online Learning (COIL) methodology. The proposal was granted funding for a project period of August 2025 to December 2027.

Additionally, the coordination unit was invited to participate in two (2) Horizon Europe research and innovation action funding proposals under Pillar II – Global Challenges & European Industrial Competitiveness, particularly within Cluster 6 (Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment). UniPID was invited to mainly lead and contribute to work packages on communication, dissemination and multi-stakeholder engagement. The University of Eastern Finland granted UniPID preparatory funding for the project proposal phase.

Scaling and institutionalising agroecology through living labs and lighthouses for a sustainable transformation of Africa's agrifood system (ALL4Agri) seeks to transform agrifood systems in Africa that are climate-adapted, biodiverse, fair, healthy, equitable, and productive, from local to bi-continental levels.



The call had a two-stage application process, first one being a 10-pager on the impact section. Despite the excellent scoring, the proposal did not make it to the second phase.

Strengthening AU-EU R&I Partnerships: Mission-Oriented AKIS for FNSSA (AKIS4FNSSA) aims to assess and empower the joint AU-EU agricultural knowledge and innovation system (AKIS) through AKIS nexus, an inclusive multi-level engagement platform for strengthening climate-resilient farming and agroecological transitions in food systems in Africa and the EU. The consortium is composed by 17 partners across Africa and Europe and coordinated by Stichting Wageningen Research. The project reached the stage of grant agreement preparation.

2.5. Member university events, initiatives and networks

Throughout 2025, network-to-network collaboration increased significantly. Regular meetings were held with partner networks and collaborators, including SANORD, Climate University, HELSUS, and Una Europa. This cooperation resulted in jointly organized events, such as the introduction of the Ethical Guidelines for Responsible Academic Partnerships in the Global South at the Institute for Atmospheric and Earth System Research (INAR) Seminar, delivered in partnership with Climate University.

During 2025, UniPID convened a dedicated network meeting on Africa collaboration for its member universities as part of the Spring Forum for Higher Education International Affairs, held at the University of Helsinki on 12 May 2025. The session featured Prof. Eva Åkesson from Lund University and Helin Bäckman-Kartal from Uppsala University, representing the coordination of the South Africa–Sweden University Forum (SASUF). They shared key insights into the establishment and evolution of SASUF as a platform for long-term academic collaboration between Sweden and South Africa. This meeting continued UniPID's series of engagements with Global Network coordinating institutions, focusing on sustaining joint efforts in Global South partnerships initiated during the Global Network funding period.

UniPID also co-organised a Spring Forum session with Una Europa and Climate University on Virtual teaching and learning – pedagogy and strategies for participatory and inclusive practices in North–South collaboration. During the session, the Coordination Unit presented the results of the EduCASE-funded project, including the practical toolkit developed to support virtual teaching and collaborative learning models.

In addition, UniPID collaborated with the University of Helsinki's Sustainability Institute HELSUS in a jointly hosted session, Bringing together sustainability and ethical perspectives in responsible internationalisation. The session examined the interlinkages between deep sustainability and responsible internationalisation, highlighting how these concepts can drive systemic change within higher education institutions.

UniPID participated in the European University Alliances Networking Day hosted by National Agency for Education and the University of Eastern Finland in Kuopio in December and engaged in conversations in sessions on Global South partnerships and virtual and blended mobility. UniPID was also invited to join the University of Eastern Global Development Day in December 2025, during which UniPID took part in jury of the UEF Three Minute Thesis competition and gave concluding remarks at the end of the event.

In 2025, the coordination unit participated in several student events organized by UniPID member universities. In autumn 2025, UniPID was invited to take part in the Welcome Fair for Students at the University of Turku and Åbo Akademi University, as well as the meeting of the Working Group for Sustainability and Responsibility in Education at the University of Oulu, where UniPID and the Virtual Studies Programme were introduced. Throughout the year, UniPID also contributed to the Welcoming Programme for Exchange Students at the University of Lapland in both spring and autumn. Finally, UniPID participated in the Check-In event organized by the University of Helsinki.

During the year, the coordination unit provided an opportunity for an internship for three students from member universities. The international degree students from the University of Eastern Finland and Tampere University contributed to supporting the coordination unit in communications, events and in project coordination.

3. Education support

UniPID supports multidisciplinary studies in global development and sustainability through its Virtual Studies Programme, the Sustainability in Development study module, and the Master's Award in Development Studies. In 2025, UniPID offered thirteen (13) Virtual Studies courses hosted by eight (8) member universities, and the number of course completions increased by 15% compared to the previous year. For the Master's Award in Development Studies, 33 students submitted their theses for evaluation.

3.1 Virtual Studies

The UniPID Virtual Studies Programme remains one of UniPID's most attractive services. It aims to provide equal learning opportunities on global development and sustainability, with a particular focus on perspectives from the Global South. Most courses in the programme are co-designed and co-implemented by Finnish universities together with partner institutions in the Global South, enabling access to the virtual offering for students both from UniPID member universities and from partner universities abroad.

In 2025, 16 courses were made available to students, including three courses offered both in the spring and autumn semesters. During the spring semester, nine courses were offered, while six courses were available in the autumn.

Eight UniPID member universities contributed to the delivery of these courses, and half of the offering was co-implemented with partner universities in the Global South. In total, over 500 student registrations were submitted to the UniPID Virtual Studies Programme during the year, and 238 completions were recorded in the UniPID database. This represents an increase of approximately 22,5% in the number of course completions compared with the previous year.



List of virtual courses offered during 2025:

Course Title	Host University
Curriculum Development for Climate Change Education in Global South	Tampere University
Global Policies and Local Challenges: Perspectives from the South	Tampere University
The Power Dynamics Between Global North and Global South in Addressing Climate Mobilities	Tampere University
Good Governance, the Rule of Law and Religious Freedom	University of Eastern Finland
Indigenous Peoples, Beliefs, and Rights in the Arctic – in Comparison to the Global South	University of Eastern Finland
Food Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, and Innovation Practices: A Comparison Between Africa and the Nordic Countries	University of Helsinki
Gender, Conflict, and Development in the Global South	University of Helsinki
Migrant Pedagogy in the Era of Global Displacement	University of Helsinki
MOOC Essentials in Development Studies	University of Helsinki (Spring) and University of Jyväskylä (Autumn)
Climate and Food Security in the Arctic with Global Consequences	University of Lapland
Global Education Development	University of Oulu
Climate Change and Trade in the Global South	University of Turku
Globalisation and Corporate Responsibility	University of Turku

3.1.1 Study module: Sustainability in Development

The Sustainability in Development study module offers students at UniPID member universities a structured opportunity to deepen their understanding of global development and sustainability issues. The module comprises 25 ECTS credits, requiring the completion of a minimum of five courses of 5 ECTS each. Students can tailor their module by selecting courses from the UniPID catalogue to align with their academic interests and degree requirements.

In 2025, 11 students enrolled in the module and are currently completing the required number of credits to obtain the certificate of completion.

3.1.2 Call for course proposals 2025

Virtual courses within the UniPID offering are selected through an open annual call, which invites teaching and research staff from UniPID member universities to submit proposals for new or updated courses. Funding is available for developing new courses (€6,500) and for updating existing courses (€4,500). All funded courses must be 5 ECTS credits, delivered three times over consecutive academic years, be taught in English, and offered online.

For the 2025 call, UniPID received 12 proposals for new courses and 1 proposal to update an existing course. The Virtual Studies Working Group evaluated the submissions, after which the UniPID Board confirmed the final funding decisions. Based on the Working Group's recommendations, the Board agreed to allocate a total of €19,500 to fund the following courses:

Course title	Responsible university	Category	Funding
The power dynamics between Global North and Global South in addressing climate mobilities	Tampere University	New	6 500 €
Brands, Trademark Law, and Sustainability: Lessons for the Global South	Hanken School of Economics	New	6 500 €
Collaborative Approaches and Conflict Resolution Strategies for Sustainability Challenges	University of Eastern Finland	New	6 500 €

3.1.3 MOOC Essentials in Development Studies

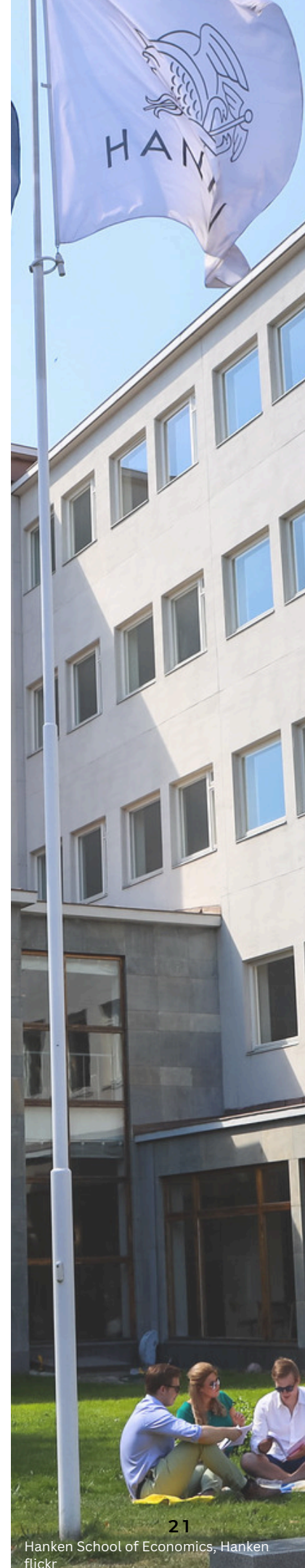
The MOOC Essentials in Development Studies was originally part of the Global Development Studies curriculum in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki. Since autumn 2025, the course has been incorporated into the curriculum of the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä, and it is also made available to external learners through the Continuous Learning Services and ILPO portal.

In 2025, the MOOC was delivered twice, once per semester, and was completed by more than 50 students. After each course implementation, development meetings were held with the teacher and the coordinating team to review student feedback. Continuous revision and improvement remain central to ensuring a high-quality learning experience.

3.1.4 Quality management

As part of Virtual Studies' quality management, feedback is collected from both teachers and students during and after each course. This feedback provides valuable insights into the aspects of the courses that students find most beneficial such as the assignments, peer interaction when encouraged in the learning environment, and the teaching and course materials. It also highlights areas that require further development, including interaction with the teacher and other students, as well as unclear instructions for assignments.

The UniPID Virtual Studies Feedback Report 2021–2023 was finalised in 2025, and overall, students reported highly positive experiences with the courses, noting that they were useful for their studies and strengthened their ability to examine both local and global challenges.



The feedback report was shared with teachers during the UniPID's annual Good Practices workshop, organized by the UniPID Virtual Studies Coordination and which this year was titled "Strengthening Teaching Practices in the UniPID Virtual Studies Programme". During the workshop, the main findings of the report were presented, followed by group discussions focused on the areas identified for further development, including student engagement, interaction in online learning environments, and enhanced collaboration with partners in the Global South. The session concluded with practical commitments from both teachers and UniPID Coordination staff to continue improving teaching practices within the Virtual Studies Programme.

3.2 Master's award in Development Studies

Each year, UniPID and the Finnish Society for Development Research (FSDR) acknowledge excellence in the field of global development studies by granting an award to the most outstanding master's thesis from UniPID member universities. The winner receives a sum of €1,000, and up to five additional theses receive honorary mentions. The purpose of the award is to promote high-quality and interdisciplinary development research within UniPID member universities.

For the 2025 Master's Award in Development Studies, theses completed between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025 were eligible for submission. A total of 33 students from 8 UniPID member universities submitted their theses, representing a broad range of academic disciplines. During the initial evaluation round, conducted by 16 evaluators, most of whom were DocNet members, six theses were shortlisted for final review.

The final selection was carried out by the 2025 Master's Award Evaluation Committee, chaired by Professor Liisa Laakso from the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala. The committee also included Professor Antti Erkkilä from the University of Eastern Finland and Professor Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis from the University of Johannesburg. The winner and honorary mention recipients were formally announced in February during the Development Days Conference 2026.

The master's thesis *Gendered Injustice? Power Analysis of Witchcraft Accusations in Northern Ghana* written by Ridwan Abukari from the University of Jyväskylä was awarded as the winner of the Master's Award 2025.

Additionally, the Award Committee presented certificates of honour to the following students:

- Emilia Sundqvist and Merika Mattila (Aalto University), co-authors of the thesis *The Role of Collaborative and Participatory Planning in Achieving a Just Green Transition in the Arctic - A Case Study of the Sokli Mining Project*.
- Iida Vedenpää (University of Jyväskylä) for the thesis *Post-Disaster Women Empowerment: A Narrative Analysis of Relief Workers' Perspectives*.
- Lahara Ranaweera (University of Turku) for the thesis *Preferred Futures of Development Cooperation for Finland in 2040*.
- Mariel Kieval (University of Helsinki) for the thesis *From Sea to Steppe: Perceptions of the Energy Transition Across Kazakhstan's Petrostate*.
- Ruchira Liyanage (Tampere University) for the thesis *Developing a Framework for Formulating Building Archetypes for Finnish Residential Buildings*.



From left to right: Masters award honorary mentions: Merika Mattila, Emilia Sundqvist, Mariel Kieval, Ruchira Liyanage, Lahara Ranaweera.



4. Research support

UniPID fosters Finnish higher education institutions' and research community's collaboration with partners around the world in support of global sustainable development. In 2025, UniPID's research support activities focused on awareness raising and dissemination of the ethical guidelines for responsible academic partnerships with the Global South, operationalising the AU-EU International Research Consortium (IRC-FNSSA) for Food Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture), renewable energy clustering activities within the AU-EU LEAP-RE programme and on monitoring science policy dialogues and research support actions between Europe and Africa.

4.1 Support for responsible global academic partnerships

In 2025, UniPID organised and contributed to a series of events to disseminate and raise awareness on the Ethical Guidelines for Responsible Academic Partnerships with the Global South and key areas of change, in line with the roadmap for dissemination and outreach approved by the Board.

The roadmap includes the following elements:

- Dissemination and awareness raising
- Training and education
- Peer support and mentorship
- Leadership and institutional support
- Communication and collaboration

Event name	Organizer	Session title/format
Spring forum for higher education international affairs, Kv-kevätpäivät	EDUFI & University of Helsinki	HELSUS & UniPID session on 'Bringing together sustainability and ethical perspectives in responsible Internationalisation'
Spring forum for higher education international affairs, Kv-kevätpäivät	EDUFI & University of Helsinki	Virtual teaching and learning – pedagogy and strategies for participatory and inclusive practices in North-South collaboration
INAR seminar	INAR	UniPID Ethical Guidelines for Responsible Academic Partnerships with the Global South
NorDEV25 conference	NMBU, Norway	Roundtable on envisioning an equitable future for research across the North-South Divide
Sustainability Transformations Doctoral Education Pilot (SusTra) Coffee Chat	SusTra & UniPID	UniPID Ethical Guidelines for Responsible Academic Partnerships with the Global South
Open working culture webinar series (Avoin TKIO-verkosto)	Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences	UniPID Ethical Guidelines for Responsible Academic Partnerships with the Global South
Responsive Natural Resources Governance (RNRG) - Research Group seminar	RNRG, University of Eastern Finland	UniPID Ethical Guidelines for Responsible Academic Partnerships with the Global South
Science Forum South Africa	Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, South Africa	Co-Creating Virtual Teaching for Human Capital Development

4.1.1. Engagement with international stakeholders

Following prior collaboration, the coordination unit was invited to take part in an *Alignment and Alliances for Collective Action towards Equity in Research for Development* workshop organized by Southern Voice and the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton in March 2025. The workshop brought together representatives of research funders, foundations, associations, networks, research institutes, universities, and the OECD, to discuss enablers and actions, constraints and challenges and identify specific actions towards change for equity in research for development. The workshop provided a valuable space for learning, sharing and making connections in work towards equity in research systems.

Based on the Brighton workshop, Research Commissioning Centre of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office reached out the UniPID coordination unit for feedback on their Equity action framework and plan. The collaboration with IDS (Institute of Development Studies) and Southern Voice continued in a jointly chaired session at the Nordic Development Conference NorDEV2025, in which IDS and Southern Voice presented a synthesis paper of their Equity in Research for Development initiative, followed by a roundtable discussion for lessons of the initiative for the Nordic countries. During this conference, UniPID Director also had the opportunity to connect with Norwegian colleagues in NARMA national thematic network on Equitable Partnerships with Institutions in Low and Middle-Income Countries (NARMA-LMIC) coordinated by NTNU and the Norwegian Association for Development Research (NFU) as well as in Global Development Studies at the host NMBU Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

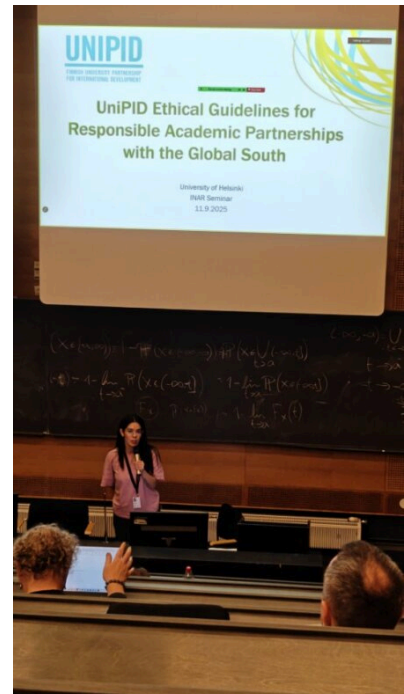
The coordination unit was also invited to comment on the revised guidelines of the Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnerships (formally known as Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Development Countries) (KFPE) in August 2025. KFPE is recognized across Europe for establishing the first widely known guidelines for research collaborations with developing countries.



Alignment and Alliances for Collective Action towards Equity in Research for Development workshop organized by Southern Voice and the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton in March 2025.



Nordic Development Conferences 2025.
From left to right: Kaisa Kurki - UniPID; Peter Taylor - Institute of Development Studies UK; Andrea Ordóñez - Southern Voice; Arnhild Leer-Helgesen - University of Agder; Mikko Ylikangas - Research Council of Finland; Tiina Kontinen - University of Jyväskylä.



Institute of Atmospheric and Earth System Research Seminar 2025.
Ana Tarazona - UniPID



Science Forum South Africa.
From left to right: Veera Virmasalo - Team Finland Knowledge South Africa, Kaisa Kurki - UniPID, Prudence Makhura - National Research Foundation; Nombuso Madonda, National Research Foundation

Finally, UniPID Board member Prof. Irmeli Mustalahti, who is also a council member of the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI), initiated a dialogue between NAI and UniPID coordination unit on collaboration in creating guidelines related to the responsible use of AI in research to complement the current guidelines. Several members expressed interest in joining a working group for this ongoing initiative.

4.1.2. Publications

Under the elements of dissemination and awareness raising as well as communication and collaboration, the Coordination Unit teamed up with UNU-Wider to do media pitches in international and national outlets. GlobalDev was reached to create the first media pitch: *Opinion: It's time to prioritize ethical practices in global development research*. The opinion piece discusses ethical considerations when doing research in low- and middle-income countries, more especially on the impact of weak or uneven data protection. The discussion paper was published in Jan 2025.

The coordination unit also published a discussion paper *Miten koulutamme tulevaisuuden asiantuntijoita tekemään yhteistyötä globaalin etelän kanssa? Poliittikkamuutosten vaikutuksen Suomen kykyyn kantaa globaalia vastuuta* in collaboration with UNU-Wider in the national science policy paper Tiedepolitiikka in August 2025. The discussion paper reflects upon the impact of the policy changes on Finland's ability to bear its global responsibility and train future experts for Global South collaboration.

4.2. DocNet - Finnish Development Research Doctoral Network

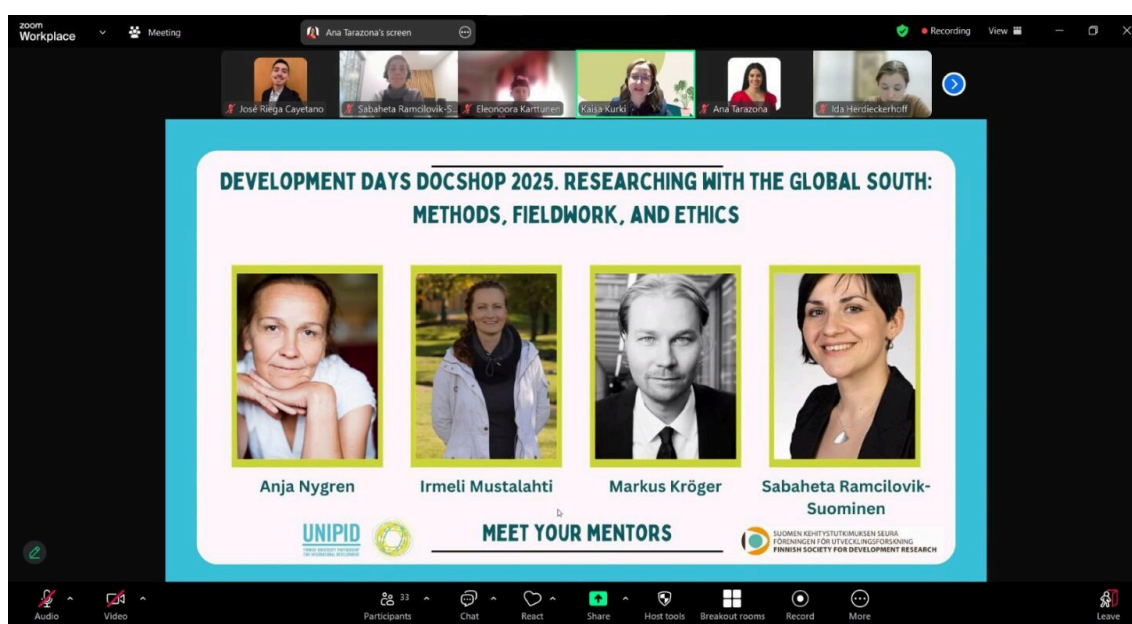
The Finnish Development Research Doctoral Network (DocNet) is a national initiative that strengthens doctoral training in development research by providing opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and networking. UniPID DocNet operates as a membership-based community, bringing together selected doctoral researchers and their supervisors from UniPID member universities.

In 2025, 19 new doctoral researchers from 7 UniPID member universities joined the network. This brought the total membership to approximately 150, with representation from every UniPID member institution.

DocNet's activities in 2025 included a workshop held during the Development Days Conference 2025, titled *Researching with the Global South: Methods, Fieldwork, and Ethics*. The event featured invited mentors: Anja Nygren, Irmeli Mustalahti, Markus Kröger, and Sabaheta Ramcilovič-Suominen, who offered reflections on research methods, positionality, and power dynamics, drawing on their extensive supervisory experience. Following these opening remarks, mentors met with small groups of PhD researchers to address questions related to methodology and ethical considerations in their doctoral work. A total of 22 doctoral researchers participated in the workshop, and feedback highlighted the value of both the mentor's guidance and the strengthened peer-support networks.

Additionally, DocNet members were invited to complete a short survey to provide input on how the network could be further developed and improved. Respondents highlighted that they particularly value access to additional workshops and seminars, as well as the peer-support opportunities offered by the network.

Regarding topics they would find most beneficial for their academic development, members identified co-authorship and collaboration and digital research methods as key areas of interest.



DocShop: Researching with the Global South: Methods, Fieldwork, and Ethics - Development Days Conference 2025.

4.3. Projects supporting research cooperation

4.3.1. CEA-FIRST

Building on its earlier engagement in the LEAP4FNSSA project, UniPID continued in 2025 as a core actor in the Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action CEA-FIRST, which aims to operationalise the AU–EU International Research Consortium on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (IRC-FNSSA). The project brings together 21 partners, primarily academic networks and research coordination bodies, reflecting the IRC’s mandate to function as a “network of networks” for bi-regional research and innovation cooperation. CEA-FIRST runs from December 2023 to 2027 and has now completed its foundational phase, during which governance systems, knowledge infrastructures and stakeholder mechanisms for the IRC-FNSSA were established.

The IRC-FNSSA is being developed as a member-based, multi-actor platform designed to increase coherence and synergies across AU–EU research efforts while reducing fragmentation and duplication. Its activities focus on strengthening returns on research investments and innovation impact by linking institutions, projects, initiatives and funding programmes. During 2025, CEA-FIRST advanced core IRC-FNSSA services including the creation of a large open knowledge platform, analytical methods for mapping research activities, support to updating the FNSSA Roadmap, and the establishment of operational Functional Working Groups and thematic research programming mechanisms. These actions are leading toward a fully functional IRC-FNSSA with permanent governance bodies and a formalised interface with the AU–EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on FNSSA.

UniPID continued to lead two work packages: WP3 “Strengthening Networking and Stakeholder Engagement” and WP5 “Implementing the IRC through Stakeholder Engagement”, in close cooperation with FANRPAN. Through these work packages, UniPID supported the piloting of IRC governance structures, stakeholder platforms and the first preparations for joint AU–EU research programming and co-funding mechanisms targeted at IRC-FNSSA member organisations, including UniPID Member Universities. UniPID also maintained its long-standing support services to the AU–EU HLPD FNSSA Working Group, including contributing to coordination processes and drafting governance instruments such for policy-science interaction within the IRC-FNSSA framework.

Throughout 2025, UniPID co-organised a wide range of high-level science-policy dialogue events and operational workshops supporting the IRC-FNSSA's roll-out. These included AU-EU HLPD FNSSA Working Group meetings, consultations linked to major African and European research fora, thematic workshops on renewing AU-EU research priorities, and sessions at international conferences addressing food systems transformation and agricultural innovation. These activities strengthened visibility for the IRC-FNSSA, broadened stakeholder engagement across continents, and helped anchor the platform within both African and European research and policy communities. As a highlight, UniPID was invited to the bi-annual AU-EU HLPD Senior Officials Meeting at the EU in November 2025, to provide a presentation on Finnish research institutions' engagement in the AU-EU FNSSA Partnership projects.

The formal launch of the IRC's operational phase and governance architecture, including its Secretariat, was scheduled for March 2025 in Brussels. UniPID positioned itself to continue supporting the AU-EU HLPD FNSSA Working Group through the IRC-FNSSA platform. In 2025, both the University of Helsinki and the University of Eastern Finland, acting as UniPID's legal representatives, initiated membership in the IRC-FNSSA.



AU-EU HLPD senior officials meeting side event: The role of EU-AU research and innovation strategies contributing to Africa's food future. Antti Autio - UniPID.

4.3.2. LEAP-RE

LEAP-RE, or the Long-Term Joint European Union - African Union Research and Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy project, launched in 2020 with the aim to reduce fragmentation by aligning existing bilateral and multilateral frameworks. LEAP-RE establishes and implements research, innovation, and capacity-building activities. The project created a long-term partnership of African and European stakeholders in a quadruple helix approach: government (programme owners and funding agencies), research and academia, private sector, and civil society. The project directly supports the implementation of the AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership in Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE) and its roadmap.

LEAP-RE is based on 3 programmatic pillars. Pillar 1 focuses on external research funding and capacity-building implemented through open calls for proposals. The calls for proposals were addressed to research and innovation operators (academic teams, companies, etc.) and focus on the themes identified in 6 roadmaps developed in the programme preparatory phase. These calls for research and innovation projects were funded by 15 European and African research and innovation funding agencies and by the EU. The Research Council of Finland participated in Pillar 1 of the project. Pillar 2 brings together European and African operators in 8 research and/or innovation projects. The projects were selected in early 2020 by the consortium before submission to the European Commission and are carried out by members of the consortium, while a second cohort of projects, in total 23 projects, was funded through a call organised in 2022. Pillar 3 consists of the management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the LEAP-RE programme, and develops the future long-term collaboration model of the AU-EU partnership in renewable energy.

UniPID participated in Pillar 3 of the project and co-coordinated Work Package 4 with African Energy Services Group until the end of 2025. The Work Package aimed to maximise the outcomes of the LEAP-RE programme by building a community, strategy, organisation, methodological assets, and tools to set the foundations of a long-lasting AU-EU partnership to address the post-2025 challenges and policy priorities is therefore the ambition of LEAP-RE. In 2025, UniPID undertook significant efforts to establish the basis for the future work of the programme. This included, supporting the organisation of the fourth and final Stakeholder Forum in Brussels in October 2025 and coordinating two clustering sessions in a hybrid format.

During the year 2025, UniPID and work package co-lead AESG co-organised altogether 7 clustering webinars bringing together LEAP-RE projects and energy access and sustainable energy stakeholders, e.g. Team Europe, AUDANEPAD, AFD, GET Invest, GET Transform, PRIMA, KADI, ONEPlanET, Green Deal Support Office, RES4Africa. The sessions and webinars focused on key thematic areas within the LEAP-RE projects in eight thematic clusters formed, comprising the water, food, energy nexus, PV, grid digitization, hydrogen, biomass, biofuels, geothermal and modern cooking technologies. Additionally, six methodological clusters were formed, including energy modelling, data collection, capacity building, local communities, gender and value chain and end-of-life management of RE components.

The LEAP-RE Consortium was also present at the AU-EU Innovation Fair 'Enabling that step forward' and participated in the fair with its own booth and pitch in the pitching competition. As a key partner in the project, UniPID participated in meetings of the Project Management Board, which direct the strategic implementation of the project.

In 2025, a grant agreement amendment for extending the programme by 9 months due to delays in LEAP-RE funded projects was approved. Despite the extension until September 2026, UniPID concluded its participation in the LEAP-RE programme at the end of 2025 due to the UniPID coordination transfer, having completed the tasks allocated for UniPID under University of Helsinki coordination according to the original grant agreement and funding.

5. Policy dialogue and societal impact

UniPID actively engages in policy discussions and aims for having long-lasting societal impact through its activities. The Network advocates for research-informed policy making and continuously stresses the importance of higher education and research to address global development challenges. In 2025, UniPID participated in a series of national and international discussions, promoting a systemic approach to building responsible global academic partnerships, and promoting ways to incorporate Global South perspectives and mutual learning into policy-making.

5.1 National Policy Dialogue

In 2025, UniPID was active in providing input to several policy processes and facilitated the Development Policy Studies mechanism between researchers and the MFA. UniPID contributed to the work of the national Coordination group for education in developing countries (KOKEMA) and continued to be represented in the Finnish Development Policy Committee (DPC) by board members Elias Pekkola from Tampere University and Irmeli Mustalahti (University of Eastern Finland) as substitute. The network also continued as an observer member in the Finnish Scholars at Risk steering committee, represented by director Kaisa Kurki.

In addition to formal representation in different fora, UniPID collaborated with the FSDR in organising a policy dialogue session during the SDG4 seminar at the University of Jyväskylä.



5.1.1. Development Policy Studies mechanism

In 2025, the Development Policy Studies Mechanism with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland came to an end, being the third and final 2-year period of this initiative. Already since 2024 the mechanism suffered a significant impact with the internal changes in the Ministry due to the new government programme in Finland. This resulted in a general pause of the mechanism. The coordination unit extended coordination and support services to a study request for the trade unit at the Ministry for analysing the cumulative effects of the EU sustainability legislation and the impact on Finnish firms, which was successfully launched in January 2025.

5.1.2. Coordination group for education in developing countries

Professor Elina Lehtomäki from the University of Oulu and UniPID director Kaisa Kurki as vice, represented UniPID in the national coordination group on Education in Developing countries (KOKEMA), established by the MFA and MEC. In this work, UniPID has collaborated closely with the GINTL network and UNIFI. However, due to discontinuation of the Global networks, GINTL network is no longer included in KOKEMA as of January 2025.

The coordination group convened 5 times during 2025. The meeting topics included development policy updates from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as well as updates shared by visitors. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs shared an update on the synergies of trade and development and operationalizing the Report on International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation in January, an update on the role of US funding and how it has changed development cooperation in April and lastly, a development policy update from the government budget negotiations in December. Hanna Alasuutari as a newly appointed development advisor at MFA, presented Finland's role in education sector development policy in the September meeting, and MFA representatives Tarmo Heikkilä and Suvi Turunen presented education sector development collaboration in Ethiopia and Palestine respectively. The visitors included UNESCO's Digital Learning Research Lead, Mark West, who shared UNESCO's work on education, digitalization and innovation, and Radha Kulkarni and Milma Kettunen from UNICEF Innovative Finance Hub with a focus on their Child Lens Investing approach.

5.1.3. Development Policy Committee

In 2025, Elias Pekkola (member) and Irmeli Mustalahti (deputy member) represented UniPID in the meetings of the Development Policy Committee (Kehityspoliittinen toimikunta, KPT). They participated in the Committee's monthly plenary sessions, which address current issues in development policy, as well as the meetings of the Working Committee, which guides the Committee's practical work.

Throughout the year, the Committee also organised a range of seminars, webinars, and thematic events, to which UniPID representatives were regularly invited. In 2025, discussions within the Committee were particularly shaped by the cuts to Finland's development cooperation funding, geopolitical developments in partner countries, and shifts in Finland's overall development policy.

5.1.4. Scholars At Risk Finland

UniPID acts as an observer member in steering group of the Scholars at Risk Finland section that operates under Universities Finland, UNIFI. SARF convened 6 times during the year 2025. Each meeting included an update of member institutions and participating stakeholders (UNIFI, EDUFI, SYL, UniPID) on developments related to scholar protection and academic freedom. All meetings also followed the process of developing a Finnish model for scholar protection for which the section had received a mandate from UNIFI. Other topics discussed during the meetings were evacuation of researchers from Gaza, experiences of the EU funded SAFE call for hosting of scholars at risk, sharing news from SAR international and Nordic SAR collaboration.

Preparations for establishing the mechanism called the Finnish Scholar Protection Scheme (FSPS) involved discussions with UNIFI, fundraising experts, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and potential contributors as well as setting up a small working group. The steering group further discussed the potential host of the mechanism as well as its governance model. UniPID was considered a potential host for the FSPS by the SARF steering group.

UniPID Board gave its approval for hosting the governance, after which the coordination unit collaborated closely with the SARF chair in drafting an agreement on the FSPS governance. The agreement process was finalized towards the end of year.

5.1.5. UniPID - FSDR policy dialogue events

Global Promises, Local Pressures: Education Leadership Amid Austerity

UniPID coordination unit collaborated with the FSDR in organising a joint policy dialogue session during the SDG4 seminar 2025 *Leadership in Education* at the University of Jyväskylä in November. This session focused on Finland's leadership role in education sector development cooperation during the times of austerity. The session discussed Finland's current foreign policy, domestic austerity measures, and the implications of cuts in US development assistance for Finnish development sector actors and their ability to take part in multistakeholder initiatives.

FSDR chair Bonn Juego and UniPID director Kaisa Kurki chaired the session, in which Hanna Alasuutari, senior adviser for education/development policy from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Pauliina Kemppainen, lead advisor for Lifelong Learning at Finn Church Aid and Prof. Emmanuel Acquah from Åbo Akademi University provided their perspectives on the topic.



SDG Seminar 2025, University of Jyväskylä.



DevDays25 Public Forum: Critical Perspectives on War, Maldevelopment & Liberation in the Middle East

The University of Eastern Finland, FSDR and UniPID joined efforts in organizing a public forum as a pre-conference event to the Development Days Conference 2025. The event featured Associate Professor Alina Sajed from McMaster University, visiting Professor Ali Kadri from Sun Yat-Sen University and Researcher Antti Tarvainen from the Finnish Institute in the Middle East. The discussion unpacked how development can serve as a tool of neocolonial control, how settler colonialism operates through innovation economies, and what makes true liberation so difficult to sustain. The panel weaved together insights on political economy, historical erasure, and the ongoing struggle for justice.

5.2. EU-Africa policy dialogue

In 2025, UniPID continued to contribute to international science–policy processes that support Finnish research and strengthen AU–EU cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) related to global sustainability challenges. Through its Horizon Europe project portfolio, particularly CEA-FIRST, UniPID supported the consolidation of policy interfaces between research communities, funding bodies and political decision-makers, with a growing focus on the operational roll-out of the International Research Consortium on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (IRC-FNSSA) and its formal linkages to the AU–EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD). Within CEA-FIRST, science–policy dialogue activities increasingly centered on translating the AU–EU FNSSA priorities under renewal into governance mechanisms, joint programming structures and advisory processes for the IRC-FNSSA.

UniPID contributed to consultations supporting the development and endorsement of the IRC's ten-year Strategy and Operational Plan, the establishment of Functional Working Groups, and the piloting of Secretariat services interfacing with the HLPD FNSSA Working Group and Senior Officials' Meetings. These efforts marked a transition from FNSSA Roadmap renewal toward long-term institutionalisation of AU-EU research coordination under the IRC platform.

In parallel, UniPID maintained its engagement in energy- and climate-related AU-EU policy discussions through the LEAP-RE partnership. UniPID contributed to high-level conference sessions and thematic forums addressing clean energy transitions and emissions reduction, and continued to organise virtual clustering activities among LEAP-RE projects and external stakeholders to strengthen mutual learning and inform future funding needs. During 2025, these clustering actions brought together multiple projects and policy actors for structured exchange on research priorities and cooperation models.



Clustering session on energy modelling during the LEAP-RE stakeholder forum in Brussels. Aino Okinyo - UniPID and Riccardo Mereu - Politecnico di Milano.



LEAP-RE stakeholder forum in Brussels at the European Commission. Left to right: Grace Karuru - Africa Energy Services Group and Aino Okinyo - UniPID.



AU-EU Innovation Fair in Brussels. Left to right: Emily Poppenborg - Justus Liebig University of Gießen and Antti Autio - UniPID.

Across its AU–EU portfolio, UniPID also co-organised and supported a broad range of workshops, consultations and policy-focused events in Europe, Africa and online addressing research coordination, funding alignment and STI cooperation mechanisms. Through these processes, UniPID strengthened the visibility of Finnish research institutions within AU–EU partnerships and reinforced its role as a facilitator between academic networks and policy platforms. A notable highlight was UniPID’s Coordination unit invitation to present at the AU–EU HLPD Senior Officials’ Meeting in Brussels in November 2025, where it showcased Finnish institutional engagement in FNSSA partnership projects.

Collectively, these activities positioned UniPID in 2025 as a key intermediary in EU–Africa science–policy dialogue—supporting the transition from project-based cooperation toward durable, institutionalised research partnerships under the IRC-FNSSA framework while continuing to contribute to thematic policy processes on energy, climate and sustainable development.



UniPID Christmas lunch. From left to right: Maria Brockhaus - University of Helsinki; Elina Lehtomäki - University of Oulu, Maria Jouste - UNU-WIDER, Salla Atkins - Tampere University, Aino Okinyo - UniPID, Charlotta Collén - Hanken School of Economics, Ana Tarazona - UniPID, Henri Onodera - University of Helsinki, Tarja Kinnunen - Tampere University, Lauri Hooli - University of Turku

5.3. Annual seminar 2025

UniPID Annual Seminar 2025 was organised in collaboration with INASP, international Network for Advancing Science and Policy, based in Oxford, that has a vision of helping research and evidence from the South make a greater contribution to solving local and global development challenges. The seminar titled “Equitable practices in research co-authorship across continents” was organised online on 6 November.

The event started off with introductions of UniPID and INASP partnering in organising the event and sharing how the event came to be as a follow-up of UniPID’s work on ethical guidelines for responsible academic partnerships with the Global South and a workshop organised in Sussex in March by Institute for Development Studies IDS and Southern Voice where representatives of INASP and UniPID met. Dr. Haseeb Md Irfanullah, INASP Associate and Independent Consultant in environment, climate change and research system, gave a keynote speech on “Research equity and publishing”, followed by a roundtable discussion with three panelists, chaired by UniPID director Kaisa Kurki. Dr. Haseeb Md Irfanullah discussed the North-South divide from a variety of perspectives in scientific publishing, including the divide in research outputs, journals’ disciplines, publishers’ diversity, indexing, open access, publishing capacity, cost and technological investment.

Among the panelists, Dr. Laura Himanen, project manager from CSC IT Centre for Science is an expert in responsible research assessment, whereas Dr. Kareembe Ahimbisibwe works as a postdoctoral researcher from the University of Jyväskylä and as a lecturer in the Department of Adult and Community Education at Makerere University, Uganda. Unfortunately, one of the panelists, Dr. Aneth David, lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and advocate for open science practices and science communicator, was unable to join the discussions as initially planned.

The panel explored trends in current research collaborations leading to potential tensions among collaborators, the impact of global publishing industry on researcher assessment and career development in different settings. Insights were shared on how can partners bridge the prevailing gap perpetuated by the global publishing industry.

Roseanna Avento, Global development manager and a UniPID Board member, offered closing remarks emphasizing a shared commitment for stakeholders to bridge the North-South divide. For key takeaways of the seminar, please see [the blogpost on UniPID webpage](#) and [the link to the recording of the webinar](#).



INASP & UniPID Joint Webinar

Meet our speakers

Equitable Practices in Research Co-Authorship Across Continents

Dr. Karembé Ahimbisibwe

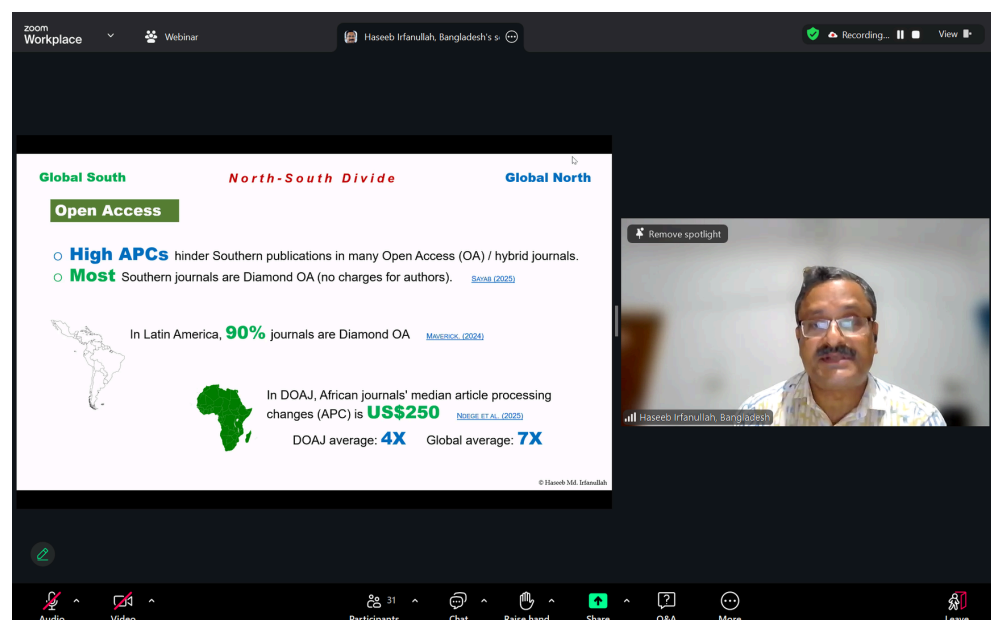
Dr. Aneth David

Dr. Laura Himanen

Dr. Haseeb Irfanullah

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UNIPID
FINNISH UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



zoom Workplace Webinar Haseeb Irfanullah, Bangladesh's s Recording... View

Global South *North-South Divide* Global North

Open Access

- High APCs hinder Southern publications in many Open Access (OA) / hybrid journals.
- Most Southern journals are Diamond OA (no charges for authors). [Serafi \(2023\)](#)

In Latin America, **90%** journals are Diamond OA [Muesnick \(2024\)](#)

In DOAJ, African journals' median article processing changes (APC) is **US\$250** [Nobice et al. \(2023\)](#)

DOAJ average: **4X** Global average: **7X**

Remove spotlight

Haseeb Irfanullah, Bangladesh

Audio Video Participants 31 Chat Raise hand Share Q&A More Leave

Annual seminar 2025. Haseeb Irfanullah

5.4. Communication channels

UniPID utilises several communication and social media channels, including the UniPID webpage, the newsletter, two mailing lists (UniPID and DocNet), and social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube and BlueSky. In March 2025, UniPID discontinued its presence on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter, and began exploring two new channels, Instagram and BlueSky, with the aim of identifying more effective ways to reach different audiences.

The UniPID webpage received visits from 6,360 users, with a total of 12,805 sessions. The most visited pages were the Virtual Studies Course Catalogue (18.26%), individual Virtual Studies course pages, such as Gender, Conflict, and Development in the Global South (3.24%), and other course listings. The MOOC course page was also among the top-visited sections of the site (2.67%). The website's peak traffic occurred between July and September 2025, aligning with the beginning of the academic year.

During 2025, UniPID newsletters were sent out bimonthly rather than monthly. This decision was part of the Coordination Unit's deprioritisation plan to prepare for the transition from the University of Helsinki to the University of Eastern Finland. In total, six newsletters and one invitation to comment on the development of the UniPID Strategy Plan 2026 to 2030 were distributed through Mailchimp, the marketing platform used by UniPID to manage email campaigns. The number of subscribers decreased by 6% compared to 2024. The most popular newsletter items included events organised by UniPID, updates from the Coordination Unit, such as information related to the transition to UEF and introductions of new staff members, UniPID Virtual Studies, other events, and funding and job opportunities.

The UniPID general mailing list grew from 176 to 184 subscribers, representing an increase of 4.5%. The DocNet mailing list, which is used to communicate with UniPID doctoral researchers and supervisors, also grew by 8%, ending the year with a total of 134 subscribers.

Channel	Subscribers January 2025	Subscribers Jan 2026	Change percentage
UniPID mailing list	176	184	4.5%
DocNet mailing list	124	134	8%
UniPID newsletter	781	770	-1.4%
UniPID Facebook followers	1650	1685	2.12%
UniPID LinkedIn Page	1561	2541	62.7%
BlueSky	-	44	
Instagram	-	27	

As part of the transition process, members of both lists were moved to the University of Eastern Finland mailing system prior members' consent.

LinkedIn continued to be the strongest social media channel in terms of engagement and reach. Compared to the previous year, the number of followers on the LinkedIn page increased by 62.7%, reaching a total of 2,541 followers by the end of 2025. Most followers were located in Finland, particularly in Helsinki, Tampere, Jyväskylä and Turku, with additional audiences in Ethiopia, India, Kenya and others.

On Facebook, the number of followers grew at a similar rate to the previous year, increasing by 2.12% to a total of 1,685. While most followers were based in Finland, the page also attracted audiences from the United States, the United Kingdom and several other countries.

BlueSky and Instagram, recent additions to UniPID's social media presence, will require further development to strengthen the network's visibility on these platforms. By the end of 2025, UniPID had 44 followers and 27 followers respectively.

Finally, YouTube serves as the platform for hosting video materials produced by UniPID. The channel has 36 followers, and 17 videos have been uploaded since its creation. The animated video on the Ethical Guidelines for Responsible Academic Partnerships is the most popular. Other materials, such as video recordings of UniPID events, also remain consistently popular.

6. Member universities, observer members and partners



6.1 Observer members

- Finnish Society for Development Research (FSDR)
- National Union of University Students in Finland
- UNU-Wider

6.1 Main national partners

- Ministry of Education and Culture (MINEDU), Finland
 - Research Council of Finland
 - Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI)
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), Finland

6.2 International key partners

- European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI)
- Nordic Africa Institute (NAI)
- Southern African-Nordic Centre (SANORD)



CONTACT

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