



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES

STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2021

'A GLOBAL VOICE FOR A COMMON FUTURE'

PROEMIUM

As the International Federation of Catholic Universities nears its 100th anniversary, the celebration of the many accomplishments of the past must also be an occasion to develop a transformational framework to prepare Catholic universities for the changing conditions of the future. IFCU is a value-based federation catering to members working under widely different conditions and facing enormous challenges. Our task is to provide answers to different constituencies, at a time when universities are facing a brave new world of opportunities and disruption, as their mission, their education model, community engagement strategies and funding structures are being transformed. We aim to support global collaboration, binding the voices of our members in a global engagement for robust research and values-driven academic training. This requires convoking disciplines and different stakeholders across regions and professional sectors to produce knowledge that will serve the cause of justice and human rights, support the sustainability of our common house and defend humanity.

Universities are the focal point of a new economic model that is no longer simply based on manufacturing and commodities but is driven and led by those who own intellectual capital. This clearly requires stronger links with stakeholders in the community, and they will increasingly tap into the resources available in universities more effectively as universities must be

flexible in catering to these changing demands. Our edge is that as Catholic universities, we will act to meet these demands by means of value-driven education.

We are conscious that our future is common or it will not be. The global entanglement of environmental, economical, political, cultural and social challenges force a new role upon universities. Technological disruption is changing the nature of work, modes of sociality and interaction, strategies of political engagement and also the very idea of the human. In this economy, the uses of the university (**what** is the university for?), the nature of its stakeholders (**who** is the university for?), the role of organization and strategies (**how** does the university produce knowledge?) and finally its relevance (**how does the university create value(s)?**), force upon Federations, such as IFCU, a wider and deeper responsibility.

As a Federation that is global in scope, IFCU's task is unavoidably that of creating bridges across geographies and social realities, of inducing collaboration across disciplines and modes of knowledge production, fostering spaces of dialogue amongst its members (institutions, researchers, students) and between them and other societal actors. And to do so in the spirit of the Gospel, that enlightens our endeavors. As Pope Francis argues in *Evangelii Gaudium*: "Universities are outstanding environments for articulating and developing this evangelizing commitment in an interdisciplinary and integrated way." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 134). To "act in concrete terms", as he challenges us to do, means to take up challenges where they are diagnosed. To act in concrete terms, then, also means to be ambitious in leveraging global outreach.

A Church that goes forth requires universities that go forth, that are on the move. This means precisely articulating the local with the global, leveraging our local presence with a wider international network of universities, bound together by their identity, and committed to jointly create impact in a world that increasingly needs institutions that create value informed by values.

IFCU may only be effectively global if it listens and hence advocates for its many and richly diverse internal voices. A voice of many voices, we pledge to foster spaces of sustainable solidarity to work together for a common future.

I - MISSION STATEMENT

IFCU's mission is to contribute to the development, transformation and consolidation of Catholic higher education worldwide, working towards the betterment of society, the advancement of learning and the promotion of the humanist values of justice, solidarity and sustainability. The Federation aims to support and promote the intellectual leadership of its members in providing ethically robust answers to the complex issues that face contemporary societies.

II -VISION

To strengthen the voices of global Catholic higher education and work together for the common good.

III - VALUES

PROMOTION OF QUALITY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH - The Federation abides by the best internationally referenced criteria of research and teaching and fosters their reflection in its members' activities keeping in mind that the goal of Catholic higher education is the integral promotion of the person.

GLOBAL COLLABORATION - We believe that life-changing science and the education of future-oriented professionals requires collaboration across disciplinary fields and in an internationally robust and networked higher education environment.

ETHICAL AWARENESS - Our activities are determined by a commitment to support the deepening of ethical awareness of universities in their relation with internal and external stakeholders and help develop strong ethical integrity guidelines to structure their performance. We are committed to support human dignity, and foster respect in the academic communities, regardless of gender, group, age, religion and ethnicity.

COMMUNAL ENGAGEMENT - The global catholicity of our endeavors does not obscure that the primordial responsibility of our members is with their local communities. The Federation will also work to raise the social responsibility practices of its members and support them in the engagement with the communities in which they are embedded and with the populations they serve, while also promoting a wider dialogue with other societal actors (NGO's, companies, professional associations, government, research institutions).

IV - GOALS

1. To strengthen the global voice of the Federation in all matters concerning higher education, research trends, professional development and societal impact;
2. To implement a strong model of academic collaboration amongst its members and serve capacity building, promoting advocacy in environments at risk;
3. To promote the quality of research and education at Catholic higher education institutions, support leadership strategies and the development of social responsibility and sustainability;
4. To render IFCU a more efficient organization, improve communication with its members and modernize its structures;
5. To serve the Church and support the development of science for the common good.

V - STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- A. Engaging with the diverse voices of the Federation to strengthen the organization's global voice and increase public advocacy for Catholic universities.

- B. Developing quality institutions and furthering social responsibility and sustainability at Catholic universities.
- C. Restructuring IFCU's research ecosystem and fostering interstitial dialogue.
- D. Enhancing solidarity and developing capacity building initiatives to support universities and scholars at risk.
- E. Transforming and modernizing the organization in view of increased flexibility, accountability, strengthening communication and sustainability.

VI - IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Initiative A - Engaging with the diverse voices of the Federation to strengthen the organization's global voice and increase public advocacy for Catholic universities.

A.1 Promote the regular presence of IFCU at regional chapter events (in person or video message) and developing regular communication and auscultation mechanisms with the members (email, website).

A.2 Improve the quality and the quantity of information about the members, their needs, strategies (Collaborative platform).

A.3 Strengthen the collaboration with the Congregation for Catholic Education and participate actively in initiatives of the Holy See.

A.4 Strengthen the regular engagement with international bodies (UN, UNESCO, OECD, World Economic Forum, GFCC, Council of Europe, EU Science and Education Directorate and Commission, North-South Center, etc.).

A.5 Promote the media presence of IFCU officials in their regions.

A.6. Further foresight and trends' initiatives to support transformation of universities in the 21st century (e.g. newsletter, workshops, customized seminars).

A.7 Implement and disseminate activities that promote the Catholic intellectual tradition and its entanglement with the care for the common house.

Initiative B - Developing quality institutions and furthering social responsibility and sustainability at Catholic universities.

B.1 Support and diversify the executive training activities, adapting to the changing needs of institutions and using new technological formats (Webinars and online platforms) to boost global outreach.

B.2. Partner with relevant providers (universities, foundations and companies) to enhance outreach and bring IFCU's programs to areas of difficult access.

B.3. Implement measurable social impact indicators to produce an IFCU-based social responsibility ranking (including societal, environmental, cultural, campus ministry indicators).

B.4. Support the implementation of *Veritatis Gaudium* principles and work with AVEPRO, e.g. by setting up a pool of experts on the different R&D sectors.

B.5. Support and disseminate innovation best practices (in teaching, research and Knowledge transfer) and create an IFCU award to recognize them.

B.6. Support the internationalization of Catholic higher education (e.g. through training seminars for international relations officers, disseminating information on different academic systems and cultures, promoting diversity training, supporting joint representation at international venues such as NAFSA and EIEA).

B.7. Create a task force for women leadership.

B.8. Strengthen the links between member university leaders and foster a regular dialogue on the development of global higher education. E.g. Creation of **IFCU's Annual Forum New Frontiers for University Leaders.**

Initiative C - Restructuring IFCU's research ecosystem and fostering interstitial dialogue.

C.1. Restructure IFCU's Research Council and open it to dialogue with outside experts.

C.2. Monitor the quality of the sectorial groups' work, reinforce accountability and implement measures of transformation (where needed).

C.3. Disseminate information on global projects (Collaborative platform) and partner member institutions for global scale.

C.4. Promote the development of international R&D networks amongst its members (e.g. SACRU). Development of Knowledge Alliances (Interuniversity) and Innovation Alliances (University/industry/business).

C.5. Promote transdisciplinarity through the creation of global problem-based research groups with a specific focus on integrating humanities and STEM proposals.

C.6. Produce policy papers on the new research and education frontiers.

Initiative D - Enhancing solidarity and developing capacity building initiatives to support universities and scholars at risk.

D.1. Knowledge for Africa Initiative (KAI) set on setting up a competitive platform for academic training of scholars from African Catholic universities and empower their work on site. This can be achieved through partnering to develop online training offers; evaluating the implementation of pilots for capacity building and local innovation programs and a pooling of specific research training positions assessed on a competitive basis.

D.2. Support universities at risk through counseling, capacity building, international student and staff exchange.

D.3. Work to further develop the migrant and refugees network.

D.4. Support community programs and service-based teaching programs.

Initiative E - Transforming and modernizing the organization in view of increased flexibility, accountability, strengthening communication and sustainability.

E.1. Develop IFCU's digital transformation strategy.

E.2. Restructure the By-Laws to further promote efficiency, transparency and accountability.

E.3. Modernize the Federation's organizational model and professionalize its report mechanisms (e.g. audit committee and quantified performance based annual report).

E.4. Improve internal communication and communication with the members.

E.5. Improve accountability on IFCU's transfers to sectorial groups and implement a new project-based competitive mechanism for subvention.

E.6. Improve fundraising activities and work for the sustainability of the Federation's finances.

VII - ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION (see Annex)

VIII - MONITORING AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

The implementation of the approved strategic goals and measures will be monitored yearly by a set of kpi's and complemented with regular surveys to the Federation's constituency. The kpi's will be both qualitative and quantitative and results shall be conveyed annually to the members and assessed at the triennial General Assembly.