

Global Engagement at the University of Antwerp

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In 2020, our university decided to rethink its approach to “development cooperation” and rename it as “global engagement.” Global poverty and deprivation still tend to be concentrated in parts of the world once labelled “developing countries”, which is also why the Global South remains a focal concern, in a world also marked by high inequality in academic infrastructure and resources. Yet the change in name also **signals a broadening of our work agenda** for several reasons.

First, it is important to **understand the challenges of the Global South not only as ‘local’ problems**: They are also shaped by global forces such as the world economy, international politics, development agendas, bilateral collaborations, and the ways these interact with national and local dynamics.

Second, **High Income Countries are themselves facing rising inequalities** in which class, migration, and race intersect, creating exponential risks for certain groups. This includes the emergence of an “underclass” or what has been called as “Global South” *within* the Global North, made up, among others, of refugees and undocumented migrants.

Third, and most importantly, **many of the major challenges our own society faces are global in nature**. These are complex, interconnected problems that require international cooperation — work on global public goods to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, pandemic threats, armed conflicts, and more.

This is our vision:

Caring for our common home is a shared responsibility of all members and partners of the University of Antwerp.

The University of Antwerp engages with global challenges in an interconnected world, shaped by diverse ways of knowing, valuing and communicating.

Global engagement is committed to contributing to a more just and sustainable world by acknowledging and transforming historical and contemporary inequalities between the Global North and South.

We do so through reciprocal, respectful, and long-term partnerships, in which co-creation and mutual learning are central.

We put global engagement into practice through our core tasks:

- **Education** - by bringing global perspectives into our classrooms and enabling students to engage meaningfully with the world;
- **Research** - by facilitating the co-creation of transformative knowledge with partners in the Global South;
- **Societal engagement** - by contributing to societal debate, informing policy and decision-making, and cultivating reciprocal relationships with public institutions and societal actors worldwide.