

## **Perspective of the Global Young Academy on the proposed ICSU ISSC Merger**

The Global Young Academy, an organization I am proud to co-chair comprises over 300 members and alumni from over 70 countries. Under 40 or within 10 years of their PhDs, our members represent, really, the first generation of scientists whose predominant experience of research is one that takes international collaboration and trans boundary work as a given; necessary for any relevant research.

At the GYA, we understand that the next frontiers of discovery, of thought, and of ideas, will be from those who understand the need for collaborations transcending traditional boundaries. We also understand that in the world of today and tomorrow, we have to navigate a world driven by notions of identity, of belonging, where the values we have always taken for granted as a society are increasingly questioned, sometimes to the detriment of the very goals we strive for. These times trigger a re-examination of all we stand for as a human society that is part of a planetary ecosystem.

This also makes us consider what role the sciences can and should play in re-framing these discussions, in bridging divides, and in pushing boundaries of our understanding, whilst simultaneously engaging with the values that form the bedrock of our societies, values that our scholarly endeavours can advertently or inadvertently fuel or dampen, engaging with the consequences and prevention in equal measure.

We question, what do we do with scientific discoveries that threaten social values? .....Or scientific systems that entrench inequities?

Surprisingly, and disappointedly (although this is changing, albeit it glacially), in contrast to these new and complex challenges emerging, current scholarly endeavours and incentives remain largely driven by a preference for already established work that is easy to categorise.

I believe that the GYA, and the proposed merged council can play a crucial role in encouraging lateral thinking needed to take on current and future issues. In the fast moving world we live in, we need science that can react as readily as it can anticipate and prevent negative consequences.

BUT are we up to the task? Or how do we work to ensure we are?

At the GYA, these reflections have influenced our mission, our purpose, and our activities, which focus on nurturing the universe of science leaders; and contributing to shaping the future of science education and training

In a universe of scholarly leaders who understand the role they must play in the society, and the responsibility to apply justice and fairness to their craft, we advocate for conditions that promote the type of research and evidence needed to advance society in the short, medium and long term.

So,...If you are looking for evidence that the proposed merged council could achieve the desired integrated approach; in addition to testing the hypothesis, the GYA experience, which has had the advantage of starting as a united science front for early career scientists globally, attests to this.

Examining the high-level strategy document of the proposed council, I am encouraged by the verbs used to describe the mission and objectives such as: speaking, stimulating, articulating, promoting, defending, magnifying, mobilising.

I would add 4 verbs that could influence the approach and add a different perspective that should be captured, literally, or in essence: confronting, challenging, hacking and proposing.

- *Confronting* the injustice of inequitable access to produced knowledge and of knowledge production; and the associated contexts of poverty and conflict that perpetuate this status quo
- *Challenging* flawed conditions, cultures, and criteria for excellence and impact, that inadvertently act as barriers in the conduct and application of science for society,
- *Hacking* and active exploration of burning issues in international hubs, through collaboration and exchange of thoughts and ideas, to promote science that contributes to a secure sustainable future
- *Proposing*, working with partners, ideas to foster conditions in the science education and training system that inspire a culture of science worldwide, that bridge science and policy, and that promote the kind of science that unifies society.

For those staying at the Ambassador hotel, there's a book on your bedside called 108 adages of wisdom. If you turn to page 76 it reads: the 3 acts of success: accord with causes and conditions, act decisively when they arise, shape the future.

Pertinent words then and now for the proposed merged council.  
Thank you.