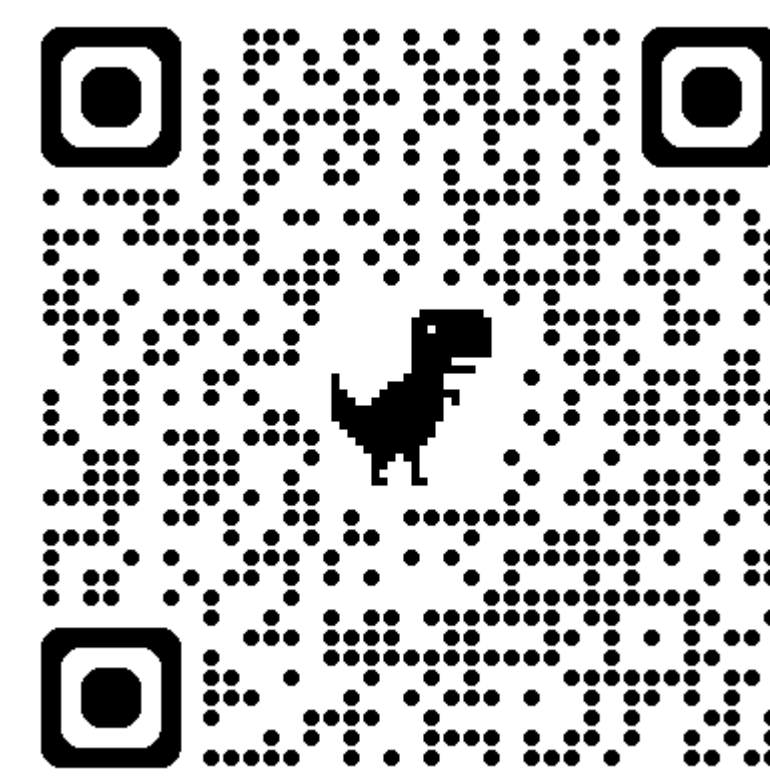


Building Equitable International Partnerships in Higher Education

Lessons from UK–Global Collaboration (Mexico, Kazakhstan, Indonesia & Southeast Asia)

Presenter: Dr Tariq Umar, UWE Bristol, UK



Context:

International higher education collaboration can reproduce global inequalities if partnerships are not intentionally designed. This poster presents reflections from five UK–Global projects that embedded equity, reciprocity, inclusion, and local relevance across research, teaching, and policy engagement.

Guiding Principles for Equitable Partnership

1. Co-design and shared agenda-setting;
2. Local leadership and contextual relevance;
3. Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI);
4. Capacity strengthening, not knowledge extraction;
5. Long-term relationship building

Project Snapshots

1. UK–Mexico | Women in STEM & Employability

Focus: Soft skills, learning outcomes, and employability of women students and early career professionals in STEM.

Equity in practice:

- Co-developed activities aligned with local labour markets
- Gender-sensitive approaches grounded in lived experience
- Reciprocal academic visits

Key outcomes: Improved employability skills; strengthened UK–Mexico collaboration.

2. UK–Kazakhstan | Transnational Education Partnership

Focus: Developing a sustainable TNE partnership with Satbayev University.

Equity in practice:

- Knowledge exchange rather than curriculum transfer
- Joint teaching and guest lectures
- Respect for institutional autonomy

Key outcomes: Staff capacity building; foundations for long-term TNE collaboration.

3. UK–Indonesia | Inclusive Policies & Practices in Higher Education

Focus: Developing inclusive institutional policies.

Equity in practice:

- Collaboration with universities and civil society organisations
- Policy development rooted in local social and cultural contexts
- Strong public engagement focus

Key outcomes: Inclusive policy frameworks; strengthened university–civil society links.

4. Southeast Asia–UK | Gender Challenge Grant

Focus: Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in higher education.

Equity in practice:

- Regional South–South and South–North dialogue
- Platform for local leadership and voices

Key outcomes: SEA–UK GEDI Forum; sustainable cross-regional networks.

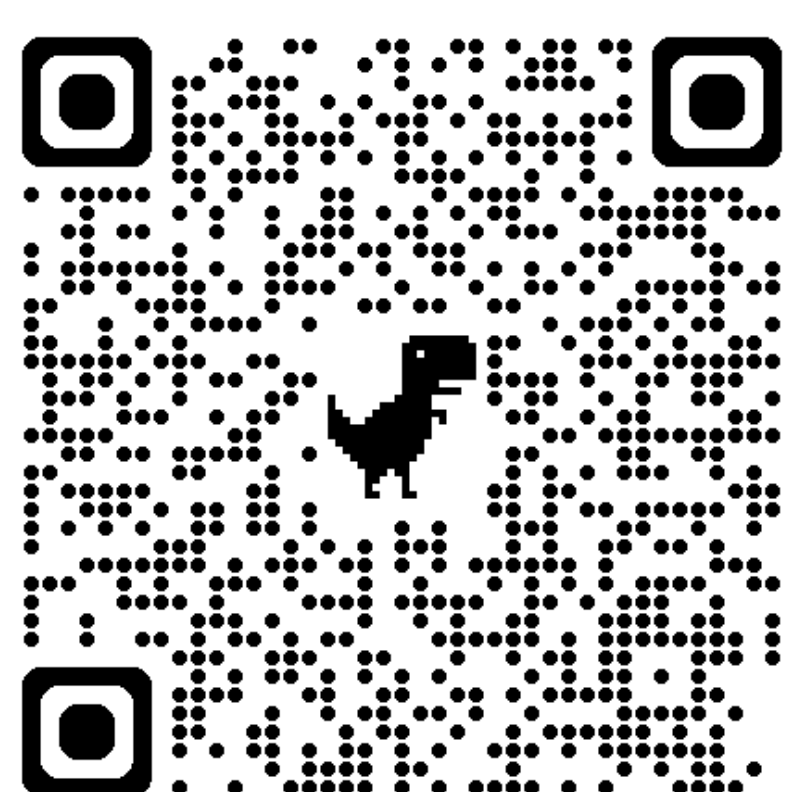
Cross-Cutting Lessons

- Equity must be intentionally practised, not assumed
- Funding structures shape power dynamics
- Trust-building requires time and continuity
- Inclusion must extend to decision-making
- Local partners are knowledge holders, not beneficiaries

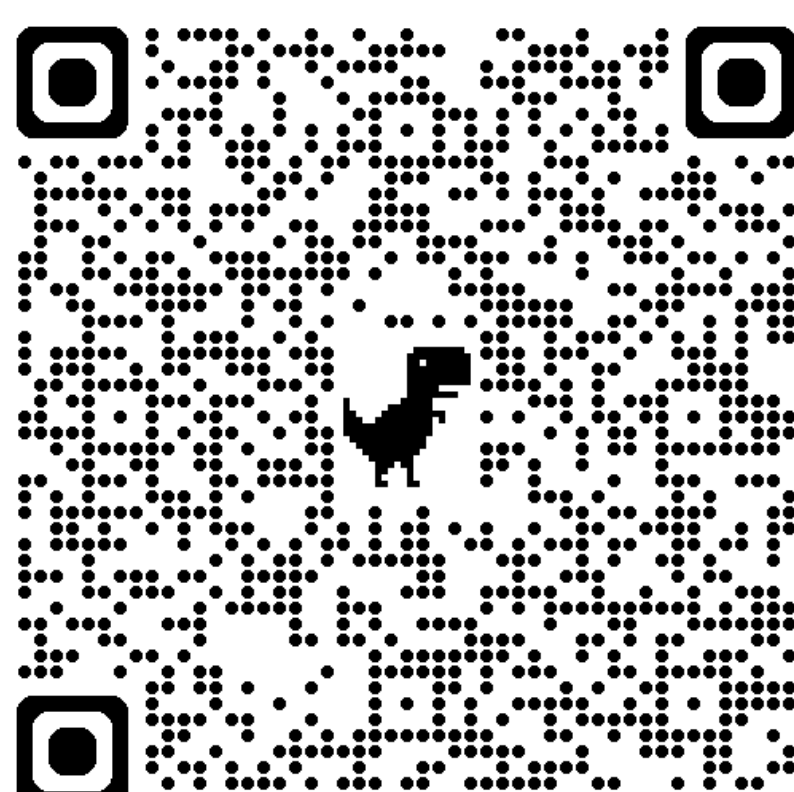
Implications for Policy & Practice

- Support co-leadership in international funding schemes
- Invest in long-term partnerships
- Embed GEDI from project design to dissemination
- Recognise relational and partnership work as core academic labour

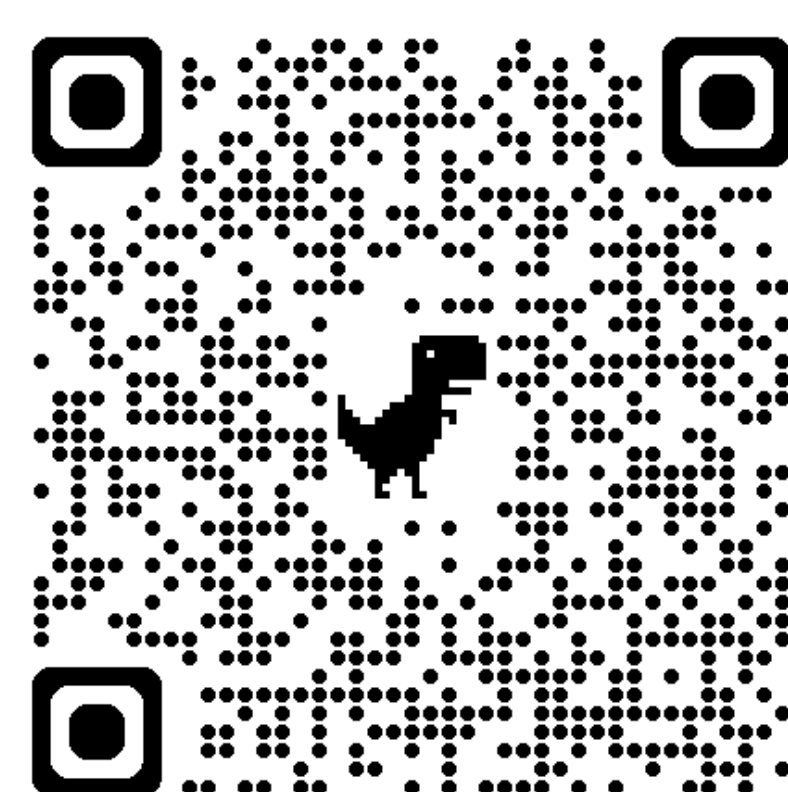
Project 1



Project 2



Project 3



Project 4

