



**ANALYSIS OF THE UNIVERSITAS NETWORK OF
UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS**
(Covering the period July 2001 – May 2006)

UNIVERSITAS

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I. Background and introduction

The programme “*Decent Work through Training and Innovation*”, commonly known as Universitas (www.ilo.org/universitas), is an ILO partnership programme, funded by Italy through a trust fund agreement signed in June 2000 in Geneva of 15 billion liras (~ 7.5 million USD at that time). ILO UNIVERSITAS objectives are: a) building and reinforcing national capacities on local, social and economic development for Decent Work; b) strengthening partnerships with the UN system at large on training activities that address poverty reduction and promote decent work through local development; c) using the knowledge and expertise of network of universities at both international, national and local levels to tackle issues related to the Decent Work Agenda. The above objectives and related activities are now clustered into: local economic development; university master and networking and innovation- research and development.

As an outcome of the UN Summits of the 90s, which are reflected in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, the nature of the programme is to be modular and open to different donors, international organizations and partners in decentralized cooperation. The name “Universitas” refers to the importance of cross-border exchanges between practices and education and training centres of all countries. It also refers to the need to promote a global spirit of dialogue between social partners and other development partners, as well as the importance of cultural diversity, which represents a great asset for human development in a global economy.

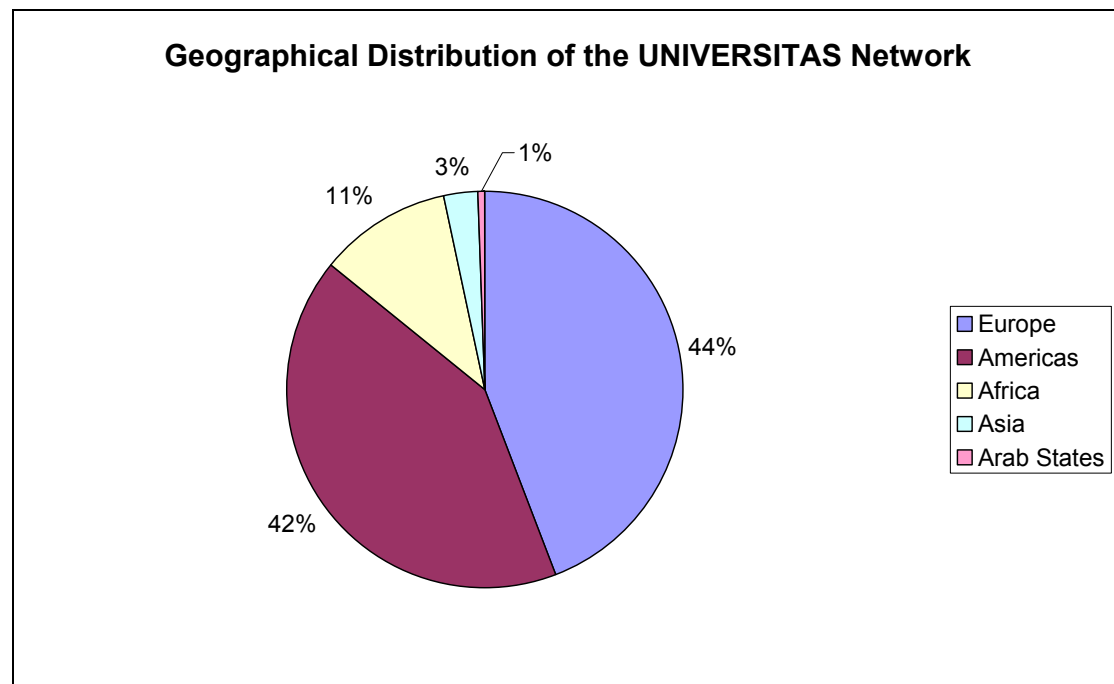
The following table gives a summary of the needs and objectives of the UNIVERSITAS programme:

| Needs | Objectives |
|--|--|
| Poverty and social exclusion; lack of respect for the principles and rights at work, for gender equality and for freedom of association | Building and reinforcing national capacities on local, social and economic development for Decent Work |
| | Promote social dialogue and tripartite cooperation between governments and workers' and employers' organizations |
| Lack of local, national and international development frameworks to contribute to job promotion, extension of social protection and reinforcement of social dialogue | Using the knowledge and expertise of network of universities at both international, national and local levels to tackle issues related to the Decent Work Agenda |
| | Strengthening partnerships with the UN system at large on training activities that address poverty reduction and promote decent work through local development |
| Lack of methodologies for different stakeholders (university leaders, development leaders, political leaders, leaders of workers' and employers' organizations, etc) to play an active role in local, national and international development; need for decentralized cooperation | Promote research and innovation in the fields of poverty alleviation and social exclusion |

UNIVERSITAS has a network that covers 154 institutions (mainly universities) in five different regions (Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Arab States), dealing with mainly three major topic areas which correspond with the three clusters mentioned above: Decent Work and Local Development, Development of the University Network for Decent Work Agenda, and Innovation and Research¹. The network's institutions are linked to the programme on a basis of six different types of agreements (de facto agreements, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), formal agreements other than MOUs and agreements through university networks).

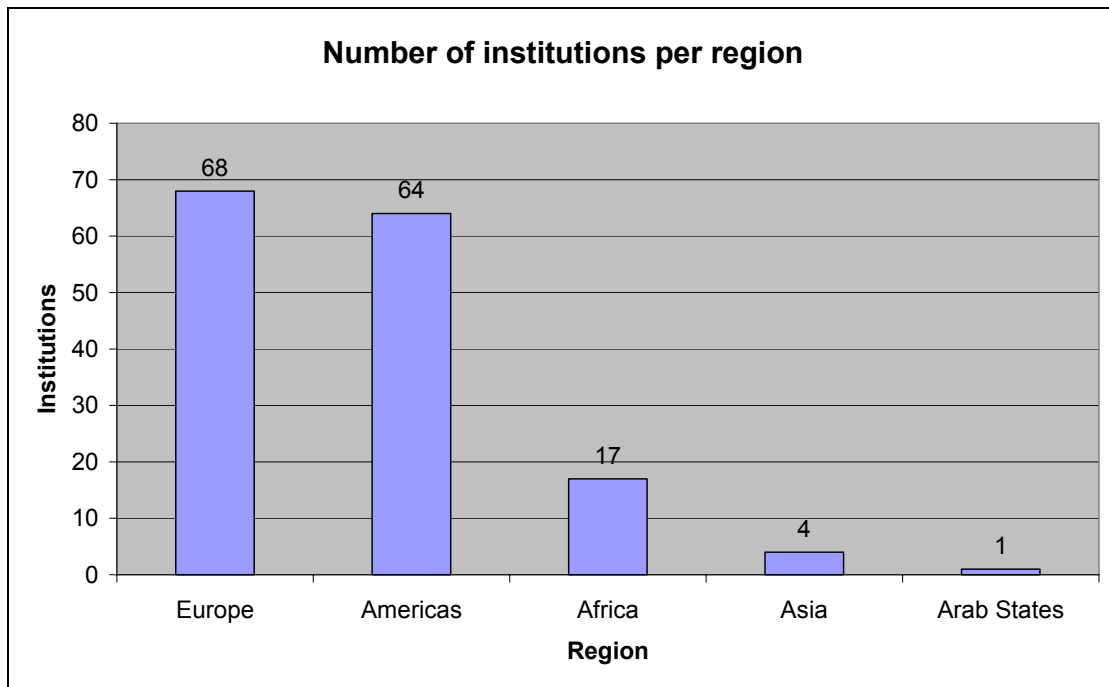
II. Geographical distribution of the UNIVERSITAS network

Forty-four per cent of the institutions (68 out of 154 institutions) of the UNIVERSITAS network are situated in Europe; a large part also from the Americas, with 42% (or 64 institutions). Africa counts for 11 % (17 institutions), whereas Asia and the Arab States represent respectively 3 % (4 institutions) and 1 % (1 institution²).



¹ As we will see further on in this analysis, there is logic behind the order of these topic areas, as well as behind the major products delivered so far.

² UNIVERSITAS has contacts with the Emirate Foundation, which we didn't count as an academic institution as such, but nevertheless worth mentioning.

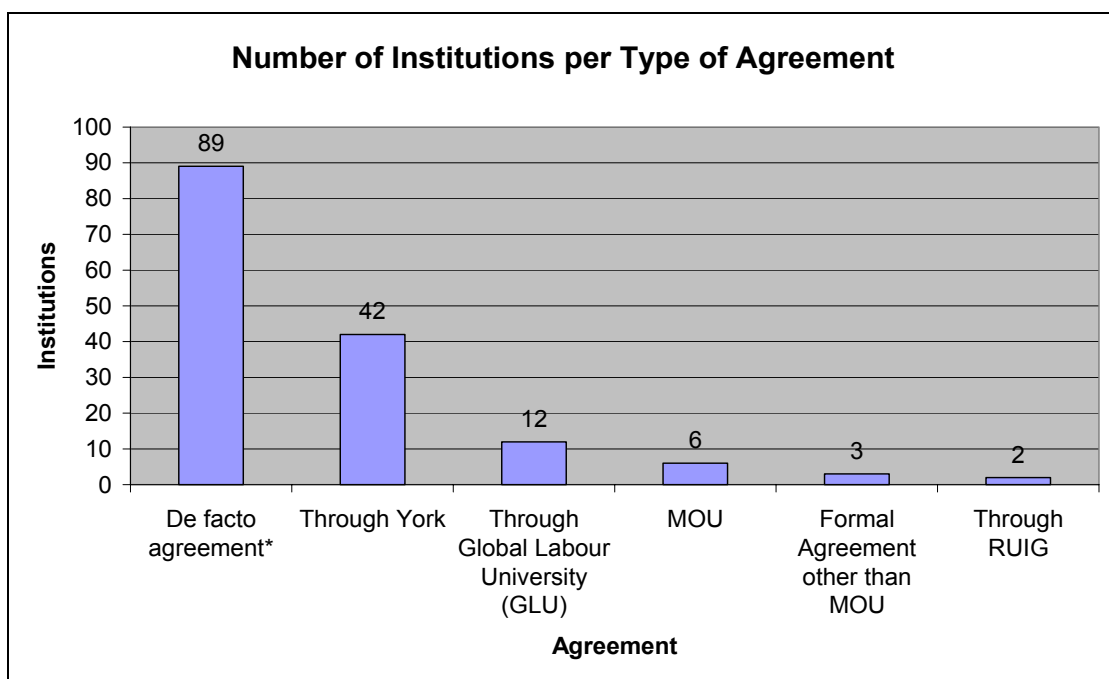
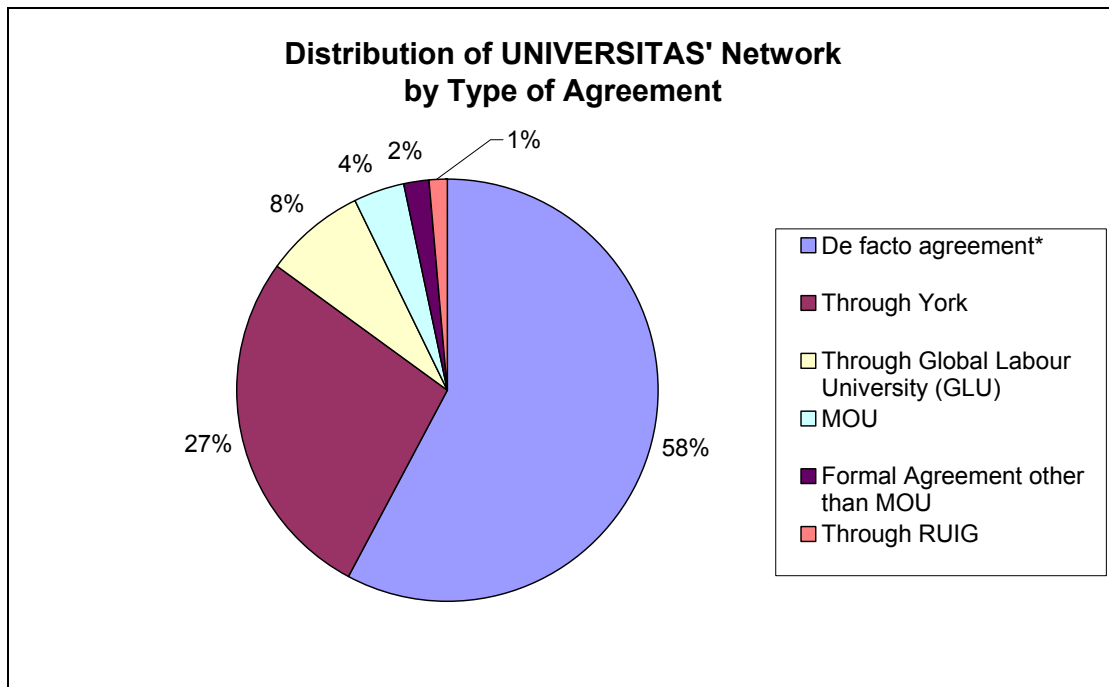


It should be noted that the Programme started to implement training activities on Local Economic Development in Central America and Cuba with the assistance of Canadian and Italian Universities. The other regions joined the network at a later stage.

Within the regions there is also a difference at country level. Europe counts the most institutions in the network in Italy. In the Americas, Cuba's institutions have the highest representation in the network. Most institutions with whom UNIVERSITAS has an agreement in Africa are situated in South Africa. Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States count only a few institutions.

III. Distribution of UNIVERSITAS' network by type of agreement

Fifty-eight per cent of the institutions (89 in number) have a de facto agreement with UNIVERSITAS, based on cooperative activities. The second largest group of agreements constitutes the institutions that joined the network through its UNIVERSITAS secretariat at York University, Canada. They represent 27 % of all agreements, or 42 agreements in total. The last 15 % contains agreements through the Global Labour University Programme (8 %, 12 agreements), agreements upon a basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (4 %, 6 agreements), three formal agreements other than the MOU (2 %) and finally two agreements (1 %) through RUIG, the Geneva International Academic Network.



In the beginning, UNIVERSITAS invested a lot in Local Economic Development, to implement training activities in Central America and Cuba, with the assistance of Canadian and Italian universities. The other regions joined the network in a later stage. Most of these agreements were based on individual cooperative activities, which explains why the de facto agreement is so largely represented. We find them especially in Europe, Americas and Africa.

The second and third largest group of agreements are the agreements passed with selected universities (through York, Canada) or other networks of universities (through Global Labour University, GLU), that are either created by UNIVERSITAS or supported by the programme. The Through York agreement is most used with institutions in Americas; the Through GLU dominates in Asia and the Pacific.

This brings us to the fourth and fifth category of agreements: the formal agreements, such as Letters of Understanding (LOA) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). This type of relationship exists with Grenoble (Pierre Mendès), Cornell University, Università di Perugia per Stranieri, York University and Kennesaw State University among others that contribute financially and technically to the programme (exchanges of interns, cost-sharing, joint organization of conferences, joint publications, workshops, etc.).

The smallest category of agreements represents partnerships with a couple of Swiss institutions on Sport for Development and Peace, through the Geneva International Academic Network (RUIG).

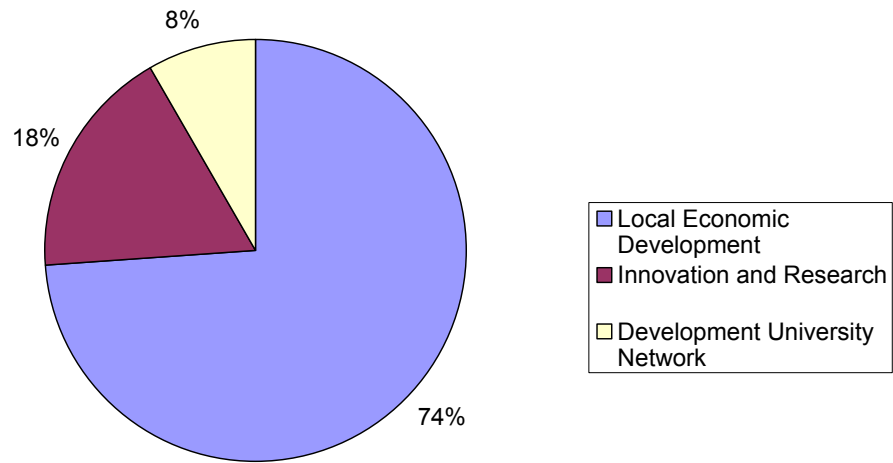
IV. Distribution of UNIVERSITAS' major topic areas and products

The major topic areas around which the UNIVERSITAS network has been built, can be regrouped as follows:

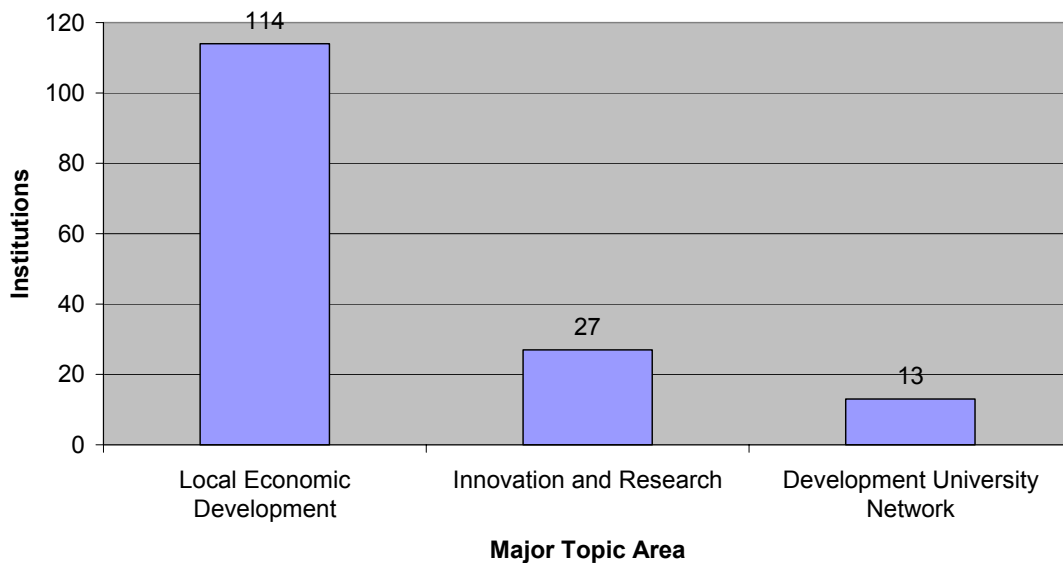
1. Local Economic Development and Decent Work
2. Innovation and Research:
 - Decentralized Cooperation and Human Development
 - New Productive Clusters
 - Sport for Development and Peace
3. Development of the University Network for Decent Work Agenda

The most popular UNIVERSITAS topic area is clearly Local Economic Development and Decent Work. It regroups 74 % of all activities for 114 institutions. Twenty-seven institutions or 18 % of all institutions in the network agreed to focus on Innovation and Research. Thirteen institutions (representing 8 % of the institutions in the network) are contributing to the development of the university network.

Distribution of UNIVERSITAS' Network by Major Topic Area



UNIVERSITAS' Major Topic Areas by Number of Institutions



In each of the five regions, except for Asia and the Pacific, the most common topic area is Local Economic Development. Asia and the Pacific are connected to the second and third topic area of the programme, namely Development of the University Network for Decent Work Agenda and Innovation and Research. Recently, however, the network is expanding in this region, through a network of academies in Sri Lanka, on the topic of Disaster Management. This last network is supported by the Italian network of universities (77), represented by Ancona University and by the Perugia University “per Stranieri”. In the Arab States, the United Arab Emirates University is

just being integrated in the network, but other activities are being discussed, in particular on local economic development and development of new productive clusters such as luxury industry and tourism (also in the Emirates). Finally, in Europe, Africa and Americas all three major topic areas are covered.

An analysis of UNIVERSITAS' means of action to reach its objectives clustered in the three topic areas above, gives us the following table:

| Means of Action of the UNIVERSITAS Programme | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Research Action |
| 2 | Fellowships |
| 3 | Studies |
| 4 | Conferences |
| 5 | Workshops/ Seminars |
| 6 | Internships |
| 7 | Training/ Curriculum Development |
| 8 | Technical Assistance/ Advice on Policy Issues |
| 9 | University Master and Academic Degrees |
| 10 | Network Development |

An overview of UNIVERSITAS' network by topic areas and major products:

| Universitas Topic Areas | Universitas major products |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Local Economic Development | Local Economic Development Training Program for local and national stakeholders |
| | Local Economic Development and Social Protection Training programme |
| | Case Study: Experiences with the LED approach in South East Europe |
| | Case Study: Revisiting local development agencies in Central America |
| Network Development | Post-graduate diploma course in Local Human Development and International Cooperation in Central America and Cuba |
| | International Master in Local Human Development and International Cooperation |
| | A Human Development Resource Net (www.yorku.ca/hdrnet) |
| | A network of employers experts for Africa (with ACTEMP) |
| | An International Universitas Academic Secretariat in Toronto, Canada, for a "hub of expertise" on human development and decent work. |
| | An International Universitas Secretariat in Kennesaw State University (USA) for a "hub of expertise" on Ethical Leadership and Youth Leadership through Sport. |
| | Global Labour University Program (GLU) for workers organisations |
| Innovation and Research | Innovation for Development and South-South Cooperation Tool (IDEASS) (www.ideassonline.org) |
| | Youth Insertion through Sport Programme |
| | Research on employment and skills development for youth in the sport sector (see Book "Beyond The Scoreboard, <i>Youth employment opportunities and skills development in the sports sector</i> ") |

The strategic focus at the very beginning of UNIVERSITAS was on Local Economic Development. Two entry points formed the basis of this strategy:

- The identification, dissemination and learning from best practices that exist on the international panorama, so that these can be adapted and used where appropriate to face similar challenges in new contexts;
- Investing in the education and training of present and future development leaders that have a key role to play in the development processes of their country and globally.

The outputs and strategy used during that first phase brought UNIVERSITAS in contact with various partners and stakeholders, of which also universities that would accept the role of leading institutions within the network on a cost sharing basis. The table above points out the need to work more on network development in order to respond to the needs of the institutions involved in the UNIVERSITAS network. A major investment was done, at the beginning of the programme, on Local Economic Development, products with consequent funding to support the training activity delivered in the field. The development of the network in the second phase of the programme has created more products/outputs, with less funding, which provided ILO/ UNIVERSITAS to:

- a) become a broker for partnerships with universities;
- b) focus on innovation and research/ development;
- c) identify productive clusters to be developed by selected/ individual universities or programmes/ sectors of the ILO.

The establishment of a network of institutions, that is self-developing, is providing also the programme with the opportunity to move into a third phase, with a strategic focus on Innovation and Research: Decentralized Cooperation, New Productive Clusters, and Sport for Development and Peace.

In the meantime, UNIVERSITAS' expertise as a broker is also recognised within the UN system. The close involvement of the programme in the preparation and organization of the UN Youth Leadership Summit series can serve as a good example of this most recent evolution of UNIVERSITAS.

V. Orientation for the future of the network: some ideas

- 1) For the moment the network developed two Hubs of Expertise: one in Toronto (Canada), with a focus on Local Economic Development and Human Development, and one in Kennesaw (USA), focused on Youth Leadership and Ethical Leadership. Creating a third Hub of Expertise on new productive clusters identification, would be a natural step forward.

- 2) UNIVERSITAS should invest (and would be prepared to invest) in some new topic areas like fashion design, luxury items and tourism, an approach that already exists through an agreement with LUISS and Bocconi University. A plausible option would be to link up with a new network, WACE (World Association for Cooperative Education) for example, and doing so, further develop the programme's role as a broker.
- 3) One should continue getting the maximum out of the network by organizing more exchanges, by working together with the academies to cut down expenses, by joining forces to serve as a think tank and tackle needs/problems, and by providing advisory services on ad hoc basis. In brief, this would mean that we should continue using the network as a living organism, as a "brain chain" that moves us forward, in the most innovative ways.
- 4) The UNIVERSITAS network contributes to not less than five of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development. The network may be called upon to contribute to the three remaining MDGs, elaborating partnerships with institutions to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat HIV/AIDS³, malaria and other diseases. Quality versus quantity? Both options would be plausible. Concentrating on one or two MDGs, eg. achieving universal primary education and develop a global partnership for development, would give a much greater impact, than when trying to fulfil all of the goals. On the contrary, if the network would deal with each of the eight MDGs, it would certainly give an extra dimension to the programme.
- 5) If we apply a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to the analysis, the strengths of the network would be its popular products that contribute to the Millennium Development Goals. The network's weaknesses could be the fact that it doesn't contribute to all of the MDGs. The opportunities are clear: there are still three MDGs to which the network could contribute. The threats are linked with those opportunities: the three remaining MDGs are of course the field of other UN organizations (eg. WHO, UNAIDS, The Global Fund), so competition is high. The above reasoning would emphasize the new role of UNIVERSITAS as a broker. The programme may continue its evolution towards UNIVERSITAS as a broker within the UN system.
- 6) Furthermore, it would be a good thing to seek the opinion of the most important partners of the UNIVERSITAS network, at least those institutions with whom an institutional link is established⁴. The academic world constitutes a permanent source of inspiration for the programme, for if a university or other academic institution wants to teach the latest way of

³ On HIV/AIDS UNIVERSITAS has already been working with ILO/AIDS and with Kennesaw State University.

⁴ A similar event was organized in Kennesaw, Atlanta, in October 2005.

thinking to its students, it has to observe its direct competitors and the world's latest trends on a constant basis, in order to be as innovative as possible.

- 7) As part of a new development in the UNIVERSITAS network, through an agreement with the University for Foreigners of Perugia (Italy) and the University of Ancona (Italy), the programme has been called upon working on a new strategy to intervene in crisis areas, based on a real and adequate foreign policy and on a common security policy. Such strategy should represent not only the expression of diplomatic, economic and military action, but also be able to set its roots in the common goal of developing a strong humanitarian culture of solidarity, capable of providing quick and efficient answers in human and professional terms.