

# The Hague Centre of Expertise on Global Governance

New Actors, New Solutions



Research  
Program

**let's change**  
YOU. US. THE WORLD.

**THE HAGUE**  
UNIVERSITY OF  
APPLIED SCIENCES

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# Context

Global governance suffers from participation and information gaps. Regarding participation, global governance is often understood as the affairs of states and international organizations, not local agents and agencies. However, the network of global governance actors is more complex and local than it appears. Indeed, there are more non-state actors involved in solving global problems than there are governments. This includes new, non-traditional actors such as civil society, youth, and private-public partnerships. There are also professionals and groups that have long been unseen or underrepresented in the so-called “traditional” global governance institutions and actors such as the UN, the EU, and multinational corporations. These are the people, institutions, and agencies that do the concrete work of global governance.

Global governance also suffers from an information gap. Although global problems affect citizens, students, and professionals directly, those actors are precisely the ones often puzzled by how global governance works in practice, and how this practice translates into their daily (professional) routines. Similarly, while bringing global rules to action is largely the task of professionals at street level, only a few of them recognize how their day-to-day work impacts the planet.

These gaps are mutually confounding. The more we focus on states and international organisations, the more puzzling, disconnected, and pointless the idea of global governance seems. But the gaps are also mutually resolved; the more we understand that the real world of global governance is a world of local practices and local issues, the more we can see the potential for global governance.

**Our research program focuses on the real world of global governance.  
Fundamentally, we study what people do and how they do it.**

We all strive for a society with strong and empowered institutions, where sustainable development goals (SDGs) such as peace, justice, good health, and quality education are realized in practice rather than on paper only. These goals can be advanced by closing the participation and information gaps, hence including new actors into the global governance debates and disseminating knowledge on global governance practices.

# Our mission

The **mission** of The Hague Centre of Expertise on Global Governance “New Actors, New Solutions” is to increase the understanding by students, professionals, and citizens of *how global governance works in practice*. We have four goals:

- 1) To increase students’ **practical knowledge** in the study fields relevant to global governance;
- 2) To contribute to the **professionalisation** of the global governance field through professional training and applied research;
- 3) To improve the **public visibility** of and the **engagement with** the institutions shaping global governance by professionals, citizens, and youth;
- 4) To contribute to the development of **new practical solutions** to increase collaborative, inclusive, and innovative governance at international, regional, national and local levels.

To realize these objectives, the Centre of Expertise collaborates with other relevant institutes, experts and stakeholders, both locally and internationally. We are developing a **broad knowledge ecosystem**, including applied science universities, knowledge institutes, research universities, the private sector, governmental bodies (ministries and municipalities), independent experts, community organizations, and students to put our applied approach in conversation with the practical, policy, and academic questions on global governance.

## How?

We study global governance as the interplay of new and established actors at different levels of governance (international, national, regional, and local). We aim to understand the practices of those actors within a multi-layer network of global governance institutions and professionals, and their impact on the global order. By doing this, we take a polycentric and applied approach to global governance.

### A polycentric approach

Inspired by the field of climate governance (Ostrom 2010), we understand global governance as a network of different independent yet interdependent actors together shaping global order. The added value of this approach is that it allows for:

- a practical and inclusive approach to the study of global governance by revealing the opaque practices of established actors shaping global governance (the UN, the EU, and multinational corporations) while at the same time incorporating “new actors” (civil society, professional networks, youth) into the study of global governance;
- more collaboration, experimentation, and innovation when designing “new solutions” to improve global governance.

This approach is built upon our three principal areas of expertise: (1) European studies and public administration; (2) UN studies and global history; and (3) multilevel regulation, law, and informal dispute resolution. Our professors and researchers study the selected actors in the global governance network and collaborate on projects where the practices of those actors meet at global, national, regional, and local levels. This unique polycentric approach allows us to study global governance in action, instead of as a purely theoretical concept.

## An applied approach

Global governance has been studied from many different perspectives, including theoretical and practical points of view. The theoretical approach to global governance prioritises theories of global cooperation at more abstract levels of analysis. The practical approach entails that global governance should (also) be studied by understanding the practices through which the norms, rules, and procedures regulating global order are made (this concerns the practices behind hosting a global conference, accrediting NGOs, or authorizing a global expert group, to mention a few) (see, for example, Pouliot & Thérien, 2018).

While we value both approaches, we go a step further. We believe that global governance should be studied from the **applied perspective**.

Instead of focusing on the top down understanding of the theories and established practices of global governance per se, we are interested in developing concrete solutions for the specific day-to-day practical problems facing professionals within the global governance network.

Our applied approach allows us to concentrate on the bottom-up practices of global governance, thereby helping professionals and various underrepresented global governance actors perform their daily tasks. Because we collaborate with professionals, policymakers, and academics broadly, our applied research is relevant for a broader network of actors involved in global governance. By generalising the results of our applied research, we hope to bring both the formal and informal practices of global governance actors, as well as new practical solutions to global problems, to the core of the more traditional global governance debate.

Thematically, our group is arranged around “new actors” and “new solutions”.

# New actors within the global governance network

The global governance network of actors involves traditional and new actors, each operating through practices that must be first disclosed and then studied to understand the overarching global governance practice. This research line will be organised in two separate research fields:

1. *Piercing the veil: understanding the day-to-day practice of global governance actors*
2. *In or out? Promoting inclusion and participation in global governance*

Each one is explained below.

## Piercing the veil: understanding day-to-day practices of global governance actors

International and regional institutions and global actors such as the EU, the UN, and multinational corporations are increasingly met with public scepticism regarding their value. There are discussions of a crisis of democracy, low and declining political trust, the crumbling and transformation of longstanding democratic systems, and public uncertainty about current political structures. Similarly, multinational corporations have been criticised for the secrecy of their practices and their profit-oriented approaches to global governance. In part, this is because the practices of key global governance actors that have the most impact on daily lives of professionals and citizens are unclear, which makes all those actors impenetrable and illegible bulwarks of power.

With due regard to this criticism and its roots, in this research line we investigate day-to-day practices of global governance actors and the dynamics between them to see if and how those practices in fact contribute to better (global) governance.

Research questions central to this pillar include:

- What are the main actors within the global governance network, and how do they collaborate at global, national, regional, and local levels?
- What are the day-to-day practices of different professionals within this network?
- How does the network of global governance actors impact the daily lives of citizen and youth?

The pillar's relevance to education, research, and practice include:

- Enhancing students, professionals, and the broader public's understanding of the daily practice, rationale, and impact of key global governance institutions and the professionals working there;
- Equipping (future) professionals with the skill set necessary to operate successfully in (between) key global governance actors and other institutions relevant for global governance at various levels;
- Contributing to the public visibility of and engagement with key global governance actors.

This research line corresponds with the first three objectives of the Centre:

- To increase **practical knowledge** of students in the study fields relevant to global governance;
- To contribute to the **professionalisation** of the global governance field through professional trainings and applied research;
- To improve the **public visibility** of and **engagement with** the institutions shaping global governance by professionals, citizens, and youth.

## Examples of “piercing the veil” projects

### **EU Impact Scan**

The research group Changing role of Europe and its leader, dr. Mendeltje van Keulen has been cooperating with Berenschot and ERAC, both leading EU affairs consultancies, in the design of the **EU Impact-scan**. The EU impact scan is an essential toolbox for organizations that work with EU policy-making either linking to the processes representing interest, applying for project funding or through implementing and applying adopted EU regulations. The EU impact scan identifies the opportunities for the specific organization to connect to EU policy-making in any of the above way and suggests organizational, procedural, technical strategies to capitalize on European opportunities. The EU Impact scan was presented to participants of the CREUvent: Europe in working practise workshop on 27 January 2020, that took place at THUAS.

### **Research at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Since April 2020, dr. Mendeltje van Keulen, lector at the Changing role of Europe research group has been part-time guest researcher at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate Research and International policy-evaluation. In this capacity she carries out research and advises on modalities of effective governmental coordination of the country's position feeding into EU policy-making as well as the implications of EU legislation for domestic actors and policies. Her work enhances CREU's cooperation with the professional field and contributes to capacity-building in a policy area that is evidently crucial for interacting with the EU.

### **TRIAL: Trust, Independence, Impartiality and Accountability of judges and arbitrators under the EU Charter (project no. 853832, JUST-JTRA-EJTR-AG-2018)**



This project—for which the research group Multilevel Regulation (led by dr. Barbara Warwas) was a co-applicant—was awarded funding from the European Commission (Horizon 2020). Quoting from the project proposal:

“ TRIAL provides training activities and tools for judges, lawyers, arbitrators and other legal professionals in areas of salient importance for the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: trust, independence, impartiality, accountability of judges and arbitrators. Its main objective is to explain and disseminate knowledge of the CFR potential for ensuring and improving the fundamental rights standards, ultimately benefiting the rule of law in the Member States.” As part of the project (and among other educational and training activities), the lectoraat MLR Regulation will organise training for arbitrators on the Charter of Fundamental Rights. ”



## In or Out? Promoting inclusion and participation

“New actors” refers to both new actors in contemporary governance (civil society, youth, private-public partnerships), but equally importantly to actors who have always been with us, but whose role and practices have not received sufficient recognition. For example, multinational corporations have been present within the debate on global governance for some time already, but little has been known to students, professionals, and the public about other actors—such as negotiators, mediators, or arbitrators—that influence the global order through the private sector. Similarly, the stories of the EU, the UN, and national governments as well as other governing bodies have mostly been dominated by male protagonists, predominantly from the Global North. Yet other actors, such as women and representatives of Global South, have also played crucial roles in developing global governance institutions, and are increasingly doing so in our globalised world. These individuals, groups, organisations, and countries deserve more attention in the political, administrative, legal, and historical debates on global governance.

In this research line, we investigate the (informal) practices of the new and unseen actors of global governance to promote inclusion and participation in the global governance practice.

A better understanding of the roles and practices of these actors within the global governance network will (1) help (future) professionals to collaborate with these actors and vice-versa; (1) help improve the inclusiveness of the global governance network; and (3) begin doing justice to the important contributions of these actors to the field of global governance.

Research questions central to this pillar include:

- Which actors have been neglected in the research on global governance, what are their (informal) practices, and what can we learn from them?
- How have the practices of unseen global governance actors evolved in the global governance network?
- How is the changing practice of the global governance network impacting the inclusion and/or exclusion of underrepresented actors in global governance network?

This pillar’s relevance to education, research, and practice includes:

- Bringing to light mechanisms of political inclusion and exclusion to contribute to more representative and inclusive global governance;
- Investigating ways in which non-conventional actors are already successfully operating in global governance network, so as to draw lessons that will help build the legitimacy and representativeness of contemporary governance at all levels;
- Involving new and underrepresented actors in research and teaching in global governance and its corresponding fields;
- Developing interdisciplinary approaches to study the role of underrepresented actors in global governance network.

Connection with the mission of the Centre:

- To increase **practical knowledge** of students in the study fields relevant to global governance;
- To contribute to the **professionalisation** of the global governance field through professional trainings and applied research;
- To improve the **public visibility** of and the **engagement with** the institutions shaping global governance by professionals, citizens and youth.

## Examples of “in or out” projects

### ***The Invisible History of the UN and the Global South. “Challenging the Liberal World Order from Within, The Invisible History of the United Nations and the Global South, 1945-1981.” (INVISIHIST) by Prof. dr. Alanna O’Malley (host institution: Leiden University)***

Of the 193 member states of the United Nations, over half belong to the grouping known as the Global South (also called the Developing World or Third World). Since its creation in 1945, Global South actors have sought to redefine political dynamics and change normative practices through the UN. Yet histories of the organization are predominantly from the Western perspective. Challenging this view, this research will make a ground-breaking contribution to the field, providing a new genealogy of the UN within the contextual frame of global history in order to investigate how Global South actors shaped global order. It will bring together different perspectives of the UN from archives across the Global South, revealing currently invisible histories of the organization by examining how it was developed by Global South actors between 1945-1981.

### ***The UN and I, What Does the UN Mean to the Youth? Led by Prof. dr. Alanna O’Malley***

Created in association with the Van Aartsen Honours Program (City of The Hague) and the PRE-program of Leiden University, this project is focused on working with youth at two levels: in schools and in universities.

At the school level, it will work with youth in disadvantaged areas of The Hague. The main aim is to engage the youth in UN ideas and the concept of world citizenship by working with them in weekend workshops and classrooms on relevant topics of global governance, especially the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

At the university level, the project will connect with on-going initiatives among student associations, model UN groups and Dutch youth organizations. There is a wide range of dynamic activities organized by these groups, which can be connected around a joint platform relating to Goal 4 or Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). By fostering and promoting these activities, a network of cooperation will be formed, which will then develop a series of initiatives aimed towards the 75th anniversary of the UN in 2020.

# New solutions to improve global governance within the polycentric global governance map

Our Centre of Expertise aims to develop new practical solutions to improve global governance within the polycentric global governance map. We do so through **collaborative** and **innovative** projects involving a diverse group of stakeholders covering different parts of the knowledge ecosystem: applied science universities, knowledge institutes, research universities, the private sector, governmental bodies (ministries and municipalities), independent experts, and students.

Research questions are developed in close collaboration with the professional practice and students.

This pillar's relevance to education, research, and practice:

- Increasing collaborative and innovative solutions for global problems;
- Developing future-oriented solutions for professionals working in global governance or in fields relevant to the global governance network;
- Contributing to the innovation of education in global governance and its related fields.

## Examples of projects

### ***Trust Mediators: Developing a student-centered mediation lab to learn and practice how to be trustworthy mediators. Comenius Senior Fellowship by dr. Barbara Warwas.***

The project "Trust MEdiators" will develop a training model for soft mediation skills through a student-driven mediation lab to learn and practice how to be trustworthy mediators. The added value of the proposed project is that it is entirely student-driven, shifting the experiential focus from professional mediators to students. Consequently, students will develop as people, professionals, and researchers, and establish sound connections with the labour market. The project will be developed by a team including Barbara, Marike Hehemann (co-applicant), students and the Advisory Board including educators and professional mediators.

Correspondence with the mission of the Centre:

- Increases the **practical knowledge** of students in the study fields relevant to global governance;
- Contributes to the **professionalisation** of the global governance field through professional trainings and applied research;
- Improves the **public visibility** of and the **engagement with** the institutions shaping global governance by professionals, citizens and youth;
- Contributes to the development of **new practical solutions** to increase collaborative, inclusive, and innovative governance at international, regional, national, and local levels; solutions conducive to inclusion, equal representation, accountability and legitimacy.

# Conclusion

The added value of the Centre of Expertise is its polycentric, applied, and multidisciplinary approach to the study of global governance through the following disciplines: history, law, public administration, and European studies. Moreover, the Centre of Expertise is both uniquely structured and uniquely positioned within a knowledge ecosystem on global governance. It is a home to three research groups, including: the Changing Role of Europe (led by dr. Mendeltje van Keulen), the UN Studies in Peace and Justice (led by dr. Alanna O'Malley) and the Multilevel Regulation (led by dr. Barbara Warwas). The professors and researchers study the selected actors in the global governance network—using the thematic focus of their research groups—and collaborate on projects in which the practices of those actors meet at global, national, regional, and local levels. Finally—given the unique collaboration with Leiden University through the cross-institutional Chair in the UN Studies in Peace and Justice and other broad collaborations with the private sector, government, and municipalities—The Hague Centre of Expertise Global Governance “New Actors, New Solutions” puts its applied approach in the context of the broad knowledge ecosystem on global governance.



# The Hague University of Applied Sciences



<https://www.thehagueuniversity.com/research/centre-of-expertise/details/centre-of-expertise-global-governance>



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