African Journal of Higher Education COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

RUCE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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AJHECE is an online open access journal hosted by Rhodes University Library, Makhanda (Grahamstown), Eastern Cape, South Africa.

The focus of AJHECE is Community Engagement and Development Research addressing topics on social injustice, poverty, corruption, inequality, unemployment and epistemic injustice, among other social and economic issues.

The main aim of AJHECE is to contribute to building a body of knowledge on Community Engagement (CE) for the African continent. The journal aims to publish and report on a wide range of aspects relating to Community Engagement and Community Development in Southern Africa, the region and elsewhere, with a strong focus on research and praxis. The journal's publications will reflect the diversity of practice in Community Engagement and the diversity of voices that participate in the co-creation of knowledge for individual, community and societal well-being. The journal actively seeks out international dialogue within the global South and partnerships between the global South and the global North that provide perspectives on and for Community Engagement in South Africa and the rest of the African region. By providing a forum for researchers, scholars, practitioners (community and institutional) and policy makers, the key objectives of AJHECE are to:

- Contribute to the body of knowledge on CE produced in Africa; encouragement of the African voice and voices from the global South in general, which may aid in combating epistemicide and marginalising alternative knowledge paradigms at higher education institutions.
- Grow community engagement as a discipline with philosophies, theories and praxis relevant to the African context, and a practice that contributes to the various dimensions (social, economic, cultural, psychological, spiritual, and political) of human and community development.
- Embed community engagement in all activities of the university, especially research, and signal the importance of scholarly work on community-university partnerships.
- Advance collaborative research methodologies, especially community-based participatory research (CBPR), where communities and academics are knowledge co-creators and collaborators in research practice and knowledge dissemination. This kind of research, which values the input of and produces knowledge for and with local communities, can contribute to the process of decolonisation of universities in Africa.
- Provide a space for professional development, discourse and debate on community engagement and sharing knowledge through the scholarship of engagement in the African context, the global South and partnerships with the global North that provide perspectives on and for Community Engagement in South Africa and the rest of the African region.
- Incorporate an author and young editorial board members support programme to encourage new authors in the field to establish themselves as scholarly writers and a new generation of editorial board members.

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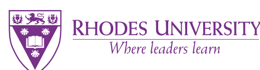

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Foreword

Prof Sizwe Mabizela, Vice-Chancellor, Rhodes University

The birth of the *African Journal of Higher Education Community Engagement* marks a significant milestone in the quest to deepen and strengthen our understanding of community engagement theory and *praxis*. Community engagement is at the intersection of research, teaching and learning and society. It is through community engagement that university research and teaching and learning are placed at the service and benefit of the society and, in return, the university's intellectual endeavour is enriched and societal development advanced. So, in the pursuit of their missions of teaching and learning and research, universities must keep their public good purpose at the front and centre.

Anchoring the practice of community engagement on rigorous theoretical foundations must be one of the strategic objectives of this important journal. A statement attributed to Immanuel Kant says that "theory without practice is empty; practice without theory is blind." This interplay between theory and practice is of fundamental importance in the development and advancement of the scholarship of community engagement. This symbiotic relationship between theory and practice is key in shaping and driving the creation of a rigorous knowledge base for community engagement. While some work has been done towards the theorisation of community engagement and the advancement of the scholarship of community engagement, this journal will provide an added impetus towards defining and refining the contours of community engagement and the deepening of its scholarly moorings. It will enhance, deepen and broaden our understanding and philosophical insights into the role and purpose of our universities in the creation and sustaining of a better society and a better world.

This journal will also serve as a preeminent platform for researchers, scholars and community engagement practitioners to exchange knowledge and ideas on how best universities can contribute meaningfully, positively and sustainably in the communities in which they are located. Indeed, through engaged research and collaborative learning, universities and local communities can co-produce relevant knowledge that can address myriad of challenges facing our communities and the universities can benefit from the vast knowledge and experience that reside in their surrounding communities.

Given the importance of community engagement in any society, its theorisation should guard against what Kettley[1] refers to as "epistemological parochialism and truncated theoretical frameworks." By necessity therefore, the theorisation of community engagement should break epistemological boundaries in much the same way that the conception and practice of community engagement should eliminate the imaginary boundaries between the society and the academy as we endeavour to forge mutually beneficial, respectful, ethical, reciprocal, sustainable and knowledge-driven partnerships with our local communities for the social good.

This journal can, and should, distinguish itself from others on the strength of the quality, impact and authenticity of the scholarly voices that will find expression in it. And, may it always be a source of relevant, creative and impactful ideas, knowledge and practices for a more equitable, just, sustainable, humane and inclusive future for Africa and the whole of humanity.

1 Kettley N (2010, "*Theory Building in Educational Research*," London, UK: Continuum.

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Editorial: Higher Education Community Engagement

Margie Maistry, Chief Editor & Research Associate, Rhodes University

The African Journal of Higher Education Community Engagement (AJHECE) was born out of the firm belief that Community Engagement (CE) has a significant role to play in the repositioning of higher education in South Africa, Africa, and those countries across the globe that choose to learn with and/or from Africa. The notions of repositioning and reimagining higher education were often mentioned in issues of the *University World News* and webinars during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the prevailing view was that higher education institutions globally could no longer continue with the 'business as usual' ethos.

Community engagement, serving as the bridge between universities, local communities, and the broader society, is a continuous reminder to universities of their public good responsibility. Its presence as a core function or 'third mission' of higher education, to some extent, impels universities to make or consider making the paradigm shift from being 'ivory towers' to anchoring themselves in communities; from merely 'educating for a living' to 'educating for life and living'. As institutions of higher learning, universities have a developmental and transformative role to play, given that the triple challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment, and the pandemic of corruption are on the perpetual rise, specifically in South Africa and generally in the African context. Universities cannot remain aloof from the socio-economic conditions afflicting the majority of people in their contexts. And neither is it sufficient to merely educate students for careers only. The imperative to 'educate for life' and cultivate humanity became obvious when the COVID-19 pandemic revealed to the world that all of us and, especially the youth, need to be prepared for the uncertainties and challenges of life and be socially responsible.

Community engagement is conceptualised in a variety of ways depending on the context and history of the higher education institution. In South Africa, there is no nationally agreed upon framework to guide the implementation of community engagement in universities. The Glossary of the Higher Education Quality Committee's Framework for Institutional Audits provides a rudimentary definition of CE as:

> "... initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the institution in the areas of teaching and research are applied to address issues relevant to the community. Community Engagement typically finds expression in a variety of forms, ranging from informal and relatively unstructured activities to formal and structured academic programmes addressed at community needs and some projects might be conducive towards the creation of a better

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environment while others might be directly related to teaching and learning and research" (HEQC, 2004, p.19).

Another definition of CE is as follows: "Community Engagement is a process of creating a shared vision among the community (especially disadvantaged) and partners (local, provincial, national government, NGOs, HEIs, businesses and donors) in society, as equal partners that result in long term collaborative programmes of action with outcomes that benefit the whole community equitably" (Hall 2010, p. 25). Such collaboration has the potential to empower both communities and students through shared knowledge and skills development.

Notwithstanding the various ways in which community engagement is understood, there are some common characteristics of community engagement that apply to all contexts, namely that community engagement:

1. contributes to the developmental and transformative roles of universities (The White Paper for the Transformation of Higher Education, 1997)
2. fosters the cultivation of humanity (Nussbaum, 1998)
3. gives effect to the values of Ubuntu (Kamwangamalu, 1999; Lefa, 2015; Letseka, 2013)
4. promotes an eco-systems perspective of life (Capra, 1997, 2004)
5. transcends the silo mentality of discipline-based learning only, and encourages multi-disciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and collaboration with community partners, through its nexus with teaching and learning, and research (Mokhele & Pinfold, 2021)
6. promotes knowledge democracy, co-creation of knowledge, social justice, integral and ethical development, epistemic justice, and the understanding of different knowledge cultures through engaged research (Hall & Tandon, 2017; Heleta, 2016)
7. emphasises that relationship building, unity in diversity, understanding and mitigating power dynamics are some of the key factors to respecting and transcending differences such as class, culture and gender between the various role-players involved in higher education community engagement (Wilson, 2008)
8. educates students through its various forms such as engaged citizenry (volunteerism) and critical service learning to adjust and function in challenging, unpredictable environments (Mokhele & Pinfold, 2021)

The notion of CE is not new. In Africa, former President Nyerere of Tanzania strategically linked university education in the late 1960s and 1970s with his nation-building goals of 'ujamaa' (people working together). This strategy included a university requirement that all students work in rural villages during their vacations as part of their degree assessment (Preece, 2013). Similarly, in South Africa, Steve Biko and fellow activists of the

Black Consciousness Movement were deeply engaged with communities through several community-based projects (Biko, 2004).

What is seriously lacking though, is a comprehensive knowledge trajectory of community engagement from the past to the present that will guide us towards a future direction. The aim of the AJHECE is to build a body of knowledge on community engagement based on philosophical, theoretical and praxis perspectives relevant to the African context while simultaneously encompassing and deepening knowledge on the above-mentioned characteristics of community engagement.

This first issue of AJHECE is a momentous one. It is the first journal of its kind, solely dedicated to Community Engagement in South Africa and the rest of Africa. AJHECE provides a space for academics and students as well as collaborative efforts with community partners, inviting contributions from the global South, and from partnerships between the global South and global North that contributes to building a corpus of knowledge on Community Engagement for the African continent.

Overview of the Contributions in Volume 1

Jacqueline Scheepers and her co-authors Lloyd Christopher and Stephen Harrison open this volume with a conceptual and theoretical paper that highlights ethical imperatives in community engagement. Key ethical concepts are explored to underpin established frameworks for governance and leadership; and core ethical principles such as sustainable development, integrity, and accountability are highlighted. The discussion then focuses on the application of ethics to the specifics of CE initiatives through Beauchamp and Childress's 'four principles' of non-maleficence, beneficence, justice and autonomy. The authors conclude with recommendations for the way forward which incorporates the inclusion of ethical frameworks in CE policies of universities; the establishment of ethics committees/forums to guide CE; and the need to heighten ethical consciousness among CE practitioners.

In the next paper, **Jacqueline Akhurst and her co-authors Nqobile Msomi and Anneliese Maritz** focus on the learning of trainee and intern psychologists' in the context of a partnership with the Assumption Development Centre (ADC), by reflecting on their experiences through community-based service learning (CBSL), which was a key element of the Community Psychology module in the Master's programme for training psychologists at Rhodes University. After introducing a model showing how students gradually move from sensitisation to social justice issues at undergraduate levels towards conscientisation as postgraduates, the paper reflects on the interface between the professional training programmes and the community-based partnership with the ADC. Following a background on the partnership's development, the structure of the CBSL and its integration into the curricula is presented. Evidence of its impact on both the first year master's students, and the second year Counselling Psychology Interns is provided. Data is drawn from the trainee psychologists' reflections and through a thematic analysis of the reflections, the

commonalities in the accounts of learning, as well as the deepened insights and shifts evident in the accounts are illustrated. The reported reflective learning is then considered both practically and theoretically, with recommendations for further development.

In her paper, **Claire McCaan** explores the connections between postcolonial feminism and community engagement in pursuit of university transformation of teaching and research in ways that broaden epistemic access, incorporate various knowledge systems, and ensure local relevance. She proposes that academic feminism, especially postcolonial feminism, and community engagement together may provide a way forward, as both projects serve to deconstruct the binary between 'knower' and 'non-knower', contributing to epistemic justice. She offers a preliminary exploration of the connections between community engagement and postcolonial feminism, and the ways in which a mutually beneficial relationship between the two may enhance each project's contribution to epistemic justice. Her article brings together literature on feminism and community engagement, linking this literature to the ideas of postcolonial feminism. The focus on postcolonial feminism specifically emerges from the recognition that universities do not only need to transform, but also decolonise. She supports her ideas put forward in this paper by interspersing it with her subjective memories and recollections of her lived experiences, spanning two universities and continents.

Peter Clayton's thought piece is a critical examination of Community Engagement as Publishable Scholarship. He writes that "*the structures that evaluate what counts as novel and fundable knowledge have evolved over a long timeline, primarily driven by traditional forms of explorative, descriptive, and critical analysis research. Community Based Participatory Research does not always fit evaluation and funding structures as comfortably as these models of research which are more established in the global academy, and requires careful navigation of, and some further fine-tuning to, review and accreditation processes, to stand beside more traditionally accepted scholarly practices in being readily recognised as producing original scholarly knowledge*". The sections on the frequent challenges that engaged research projects face in navigating current scholarly review and accreditation processes and his pointers to the fact the formal review and accreditation processes clearly need some nuancing to better reflect the requirements of engaged research, should be of great interest to engaged researchers. He clearly indicates that the voices of engaged research practitioners in the spaces where these processes can be steered, must be heard.

An international contribution from the global South follows next with **Matías Flores and his co-authors Romina Colacci and Agustín Cano's** paper which focuses on critical community engagement, the Latin American ethos and its contributions to a Global South dialogue. The paper presents the history that constitutes the Latin American community engagement ethos, its prevalence in critical community engagement, and some experiences that illustrate a living paradigm still under construction that responds to the continent's needs. It concludes with an invitation to review the critical traditions of community engagement and promote the dialogue of experiences in the Global South. In this paper, community engagement is understood as a disputed concept throughout history that

can potentially house an ethical-political pedagogical project that questions traditional university models.

Shadreck Muchaku and Grey Magaiza's paper is titled, *Contemporary narratives on climate-induced migration and community engagement interventions in rural communities: A systematic literature review.* It focuses on climate change as a critical factor in migration and displacement and posits that global efforts to address the impacts of climate change on migration have not been able to address climate change-induced migration substantially. Their study, therefore, explored how local challenges can be leveraged in addressing global issues by conducting a systematic literature review to analyse the potential of local solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change on migration. Data was collected from full-text peer-reviewed journals published between 2010 to 2023 from the Scopus database. Atlas ti.23 was used to create codes and themes and then construct flowcharts that effectively demonstrated the importance of addressing issues at the local level when dealing with global challenges. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on how local approaches can mitigate the impact of climate on migration.

Samuel Fongwa and co-authors Stewart Ngandu and Bongiwe Mncwango's paper explores university engagement as local economic development by estimating the economic impact of a South African university using a Keynesian multiplier approach. They highlight that a largely neglected form of engagement is the contribution of the university to local economic development. Their paper contributes to closing that gap through an empirical study of a newly established South African university within a secondary city characterized by high unemployment, a declining economic sector, but with a growing staff and student body and high university expenditures. The study used a Keynesian-type multiplier impact model, to demonstrate the extent to which the university contributes (through a combination of direct and indirect activities of the university and its constituencies – staff, students, visitors, and local businesses) to the local municipality, which translates to about 19% of the provincial GDP. In conclusion, the authors propose that intentional engagement policies and practices from universities coupled with active commitments from local or provincial government and other external stakeholders could ensure the universities serve a stronger anchoring and developmental role within the city and region.

Concluding Remarks

Community engagement is the interface between higher education institutions and local communities. The contributions in this volume highlight the diversity of issues that community engagement focuses on, as an attempt to draw attention to the challenges that confront society in general and communities in particular, and the role that higher education can play in addressing these challenges. Of note is that the papers in this first volume of AJHECE have contributed to amplifying the characteristics of Community Engagement.

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Ethical Imperatives in Community Engagement

Jacqueline Scheepers and **Lloyd Christopher**, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa, **Stephen Harrison**, Harrison Law, South Africa

Abstract

As the impetus for community engagement (CE) grows in higher education, it is imperative that such growth takes place within a sound ethical framework. While research-related ethics and norms are well developed, there is now a need for the development of ethical guidelines to underpin CE initiatives. We begin by framing the discussion of ethics within policy and theoretical frameworks underpinning CE in higher education in South Africa. Core concepts and values emerging from these frameworks, such as social responsibility, Ubuntu and interconnectedness, are important starting points for ethics in CE. As CE involves the exercising of leadership by universities and community partners, we explore key ethical concepts to underpin established frameworks for governance and leadership, such as the King IV report. We highlight core ethical principles such as sustainable development, integrity, and accountability. We further consider that value propositions must not narrowly focus on value to stakeholders, but also to broader systems. The discussion then narrows to the application of ethics to the specifics of CE. We apply the "four principles" of Beauchamp and Childress (non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, and autonomy), considering each of these principles in turn. We discuss their application in practical terms to university CE initiatives. Finally, we consider the way forward in relation to the integration of these ethical imperatives into higher education CE policies and processes. Recommendations include: the inclusion of ethical frameworks in CE policies of universities; the establishment of ethics committees/forums to guide CE; and the need to heighten ethical consciousness among CE practitioners.

Keywords: *Ethical imperatives, Community Engagement, partnerships, higher education, systems theories*

Introduction and context

Discussions on ethics in higher education institutions are usually concerned with research where the rights and welfare of individual participants are considered. Ethics is also a key consideration in community engagement (CE) that may include both individuals and

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communities. Kotzé et al. (2002) explain that we cannot claim to know what is good for the community, but rather we must know about them. There are broader ethical standards and expectations that must be considered where the ethical considerations are applied to the community. The social justice lens demands meaningful engagement with communities when it concerns matters that affect their lives.

CE, as one of the three pillars of higher education, is promoted as a transformation imperative for South African universities (DOE, 1997). As a South African Higher Education mission, CE was intended to strengthen democracy, citizenship, and the fostering of a commitment to contribute to the common good of citizens (Mohale, 2023). In response, various universities established entities and structures to manage and coordinate CE in its many forms, including Service-Learning (curricular-based), and volunteerism (co-curricular) programmes. Both these forms of CE incorporate reflective activities as part of their practices.

Ethics of Reflection in CE

Critical and structured reflection is an essential learning activity in CE. Reflection on experiences can take many forms, including the telling of stories on the CE experience and through relating current experiences to prior knowledge, perceptions, and historical events. It is common for lecturers and researchers to use digital storytelling (DST) in CE-related assessments and projects without a full understanding of the ethical challenges. Gachago et al. (2021) propose some general assumptions about DST and how these differ when practiced in the higher education context which are: voluntary participation/right to withdraw; support/skilled facilitators; do no harm; reciprocity; dialogue and equal engagement across generations; and representation. These assumptions should be considered when embarking on DST, particularly for CE, and especially as external university partners are involved in CE projects.

Ethics in CE partnerships

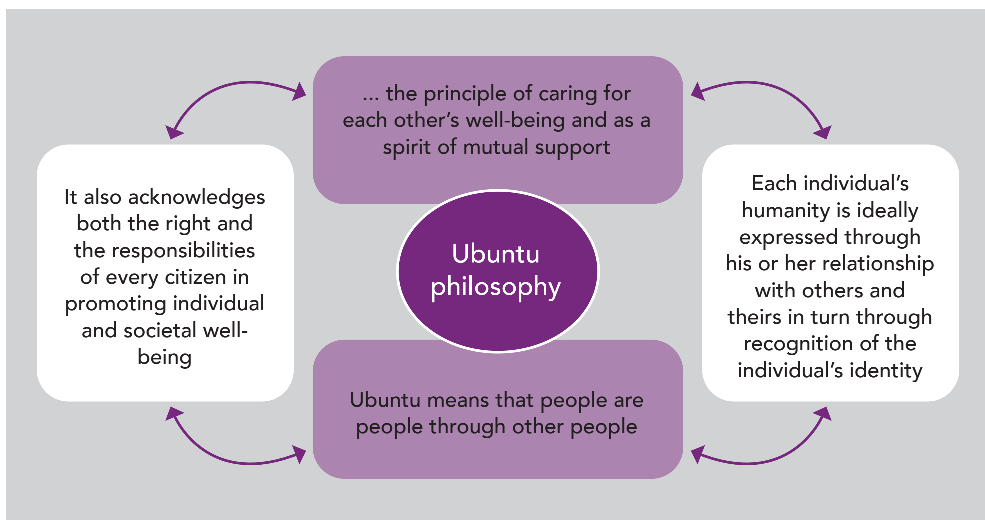
Ethical considerations are integral to the development of sustainable partnerships and relationships in CE. These partnerships can include community-based organisations, government representatives, funders, and so on. Depending on who has ownership of, for example, the most resources, the partnership can become a site where power is wielded unethically, leading to unethical practices. As advocated in this paper, CE project partners, including university staff and students, must invest in applying ethical principles promoted by policy guidelines and ethical frameworks.

Philosophical and theoretical framework for Community Engagement (CE)

Community Engagement (CE) embraces a plethora of theories and philosophies, particularly those in the social sciences. For the purposes of this discussion, systems theories and the philosophy of Ubuntu are critical to an understanding of the ethical imperatives required in CE. Many definitions for the Ubuntu philosophy exist which range from manners, social etiquette, and the principles of humanity. The Ubuntu philosophy can be traced back to the Netchar Maat, an ancient holy belief, which has seven cardinal virtues: Truth, Justice, Propriety, Harmony, Balance, Reciprocity and Order (Scheepers, 2019b; Koka, 2002; Broodryk, 2006). Applying the Ubuntu philosophy to CE allows for the realisation and awareness of ethical principles as it acts as an ethics compass for CE project and partnership activities.

The Ubuntu philosophy

Archbishop Desmond Tutu spoke of Ubuntu as the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity. In the definition below from The South African White Paper on Welfare (1997, p.12), Ubuntu is officially acknowledged as:



These values of Ubuntu are the cornerstone philosophy of CE as it emphasizes servant leadership, care, mutuality, humanity, and civic responsibility. It is important that CE leaders and practitioners understand that Ubuntu is a philosophy that conscientises leaders to the interconnectivity between humans and the responsibility that all humans have towards

each other. For CE this is an important consideration as it shapes engagement, partnership and relationship building, which is an important aspect of CE. The systems theories allow for a theoretical context for realisation of the Ubuntu philosophy within CE practices.

Systems thinking and its relevance for CE

Systems theory posits that humans exist in a system that is interconnected (Hendry & Seidl, 2002; Luhmann, 1995). This theory is relevant for both CE practitioners, who implement CE projects and programmes, and CE researchers, as CE calls for an interconnected system of many diverse components. The integrated CE system can bring about change as the strength lies in the combination of diverse skills, knowledge and competencies. A previous study by CE practitioners indicated that students receive guidance during experiential learning experiences in Service-Learning which leads to the strengthening of the relationships with communities and service partners through the integration of active citizenship activities and the integration of social awareness in the curriculum (Harrison et al., 2020). Drawing connections between the achievement of learning outcomes for students as per the curriculum and aligning them to the identified objectives of the CE project as per the agreement with community and government partners, are critical. This engagement requires due diligence regarding ethical imperatives and power sharing between participants and project partners.

Understanding CE partnerships

CE partnerships can create cohesive systems by aligning policies, strategies, aims and objectives of government, communities, and universities, preventing duplication and wastage. Developing communities of practice emanating from CE project partnerships can contribute to the development of creative responses to societal challenges within the context of a rapidly changing world (Scheepers, 2022; 2019a). Partnerships can be understood as an interrelated system of diverse individuals engaging within a communication system. Luhmann's (1995) "episode" is used to explain a series of communication activities in a particular social system which provides a context for engagement with partners. According to Hendry and Seidl (2003), an "episode" is a component of all social systems. In episodes, mechanisms are applied to create discursive spaces where engagement can occur and where reflective practice is encouraged. Luhmann's (1995) theory of change argues that episodes are relevant to partnerships as they create spaces for engagement and dialogue (Scheepers, 2019a). Factors which are external to the partnerships can affect or hamper the episodic processes. Strategic outcomes, as posited by Roos and Von Krogh (1996, p.55) are dependent on "who talks to whom, why they talk, what they talk about, and when these conversations take place". Factors which impact episodes include selection of sites, themes, and even time and duration of engagement. Knowledge generation within these discursive spaces are a critical consideration for CE project partners and participants.

Ethical Knowledge Generation Spaces in CE

Gibbons (2006) argues for an approach to knowledge generation where universities are not the only owners of knowledge anymore. Ways of engagement in the form of quintuple helix partnerships, comprised of society, academia, government, and industry, have shifted for universities towards more collaborative and inclusive approaches. Traditionally universities positioned themselves as the main proprietors within the knowledge space. When all knowledge types within CE partnerships is not acknowledged, unethical practices and unsustainable CE projects could prevail. Therefore, universities should recognise knowledge systems and resources that communities bring to CE projects.

Boyer's Scholarship of Engagement

Boyer's Taxonomy for the Scholarship of Engagement is comprised of (1) research, teaching, integration, and application scholarship that (2) incorporate reciprocal practices of civic engagement into the production of knowledge (Mtawa et al., 2016). This taxonomy is used to explain those practices which stretch across disciplines and across research, teaching and CE where scholars engage with communities (Barker, 2004). Due consideration should be given to the scholarly activities of CE where ethical imperatives can be incorporated. Boyer (1996) further explains four dimensions of engagement being i) scholarship, ii) integration, iii) application and most importantly for this study, iv) the scholarship of teaching. With the scholarship of teaching, there are blurred lines between traditional teacher and learner to include a learning community which is inclusive of government, community, students and university staff (Boyer, 1996; 1990). Partnerships can be understood as "knowledge based collaborations in which all partners have things to teach each other, things to learn from each other, and things they will learn together" (Holland & Gelmon 1998, p.5). CE collaborative partnerships can act as catalysts for change and locations where knowledge is produced and exchanged through interdisciplinary and intercultural engagement and dialogue.

The benefits of Socratic Dialogue for CE

Socratic Dialogue provides an additional useful framework to deepen ethical considerations related to CE. Project partners and participants may find it useful to consider the Benefits of Socratic Dialogue for CE which are presented as:

- Improvement of Environment and Communication where a safe space for engagement is created to facilitate open communication and mutual respect and where there is no judgement.
- Epistemological Improvement where personal statements regarding assumptions are clarified. Knowledge is advanced through building an understanding of the situation from your own and other's perspectives leading to improved ability to analyse, reflect and investigate, and to self-learn.

- Personal Growth is achieved as people are empowered by being listened to, communication and expressiveness is improved, and self-knowledge increases leading to an increased understanding of what motivates us and others. Humility and courage are reinforced.
- Ethical Improvement occurs when there is consciousness of responsibility over own actions and comprehending the impact of our actions.
- Relational Improvement due to consideration of others and capabilities to understand empathy for others leading to stronger co-operation to work towards a common goal.
- Organizational Improvement due to developing a common meaning which strengthens teams, organisational relationships and cooperation between people. Decision-making processes are improved, becoming democratic, more informed and symmetrical.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on: González & Fonseca, (2019); Bennett et al., (2015, p.159).

CE project partnerships often occur across disciplinary boundaries within the university and externally within communities which calls for a different approach.

The interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches

Transdisciplinary approaches rely on team members sharing roles and crossing disciplinary boundaries to collaborate and integrate team members' expertise to provide more efficient service (Bruder, 1994). Knowledge sharing and exchange between partners is proposed by Pitso (2014) and further the person-centred approach by Du Plessis & Van Dyk (2013) is advanced where the voices of the community are heard. A framework for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary co-creation of the knowledge castle can guide partners who work in CE inter-and trans-disciplinary contexts (Mauser et al., 2013).

- Phase 1: Co-design of the research – or CE project/engaged research project
- Phase 2: Co-production of knowledge – CE implementation/generate and exchange knowledge
- Phase 3: Co-dissemination of results – Sharing CE project product/outputs/artefacts with everyone

Adapted by researchers from (Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, 2013 in Mauser et al., 2013).

Although this framework is aimed at research activities, the concepts can be adapted to CE engaged research practices and projects. However, there are many other important policies and guidelines that can assist practitioners with CE.

Policy milieu for Community Engagement

CE practices in higher education institutions are guided and framed by global, national, and regional policies and guidelines for example:

- The Talloires Declaration (1990).
- The African Union Agenda (2063).
- Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997). Department of Education.
- White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). Department of Welfare (former).
- National Research Foundation Engaged Research Framework (2022). Department of Science and Innovation.
- Integrated Development Plans of Municipalities.

The above list is not exhaustive, and universities shape their own vision and strategic frameworks based on their own context.

University vision, mission, and policy

Universities are also guided by their respective visions, missions, and policies. These all lay the foundation on which CE in higher education is conceptualised and executed. Universities have an ethical responsibility to respond to the challenges facing society. The Education White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation (1997) legislates the participation of universities in the development of society through programmes, research activities and CE projects. University policies, strategies and guidelines shape CE practices and therefore are critical to the shaping of the agenda in partnerships with external partners.

Sustainable Development Goals

Most project activities are aligned to the achievement of the seventeen United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the South African National Development Plan, with its strategic imperatives and objectives. The South African Constitution stands resolute on the attainment of human dignity, equality and the pursuit of human rights and freedom for all citizens (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Local and regional strategic imperatives and objectives like the Integrated Development Plans of local municipalities and the Batho Pele Principles bind community engagement practitioners to these imperatives.

Principles of Engaged Research

In 2022, the Department of Science and Innovation and the National Research Foundation published an Engaged Research Framework for universities as a guide to more ethical and inclusive research practices involving external university partners. The five principles guiding the framework are explained below:

Table 1: NRF Principles of Engaged Research (NRF, 2022, pp.15-16)

Principle	Definition
1. Active citizenship	Engaged Research is driven by the active citizenship of researchers and research institutions for the common good of humanity, through (co)production of socially inclusive and robust knowledge that is anticipatory, inclusive, responsive, and reflexive to the needs, challenges, and aspirations of society. Unlocking this active citizenship of researchers and research institutions requires integrated resourcing and capacity development approaches.
2. Reciprocity	Engaged Research approaches that are guided by principles of reciprocity for mutual benefit, genuine and equal standing amongst all actors, and pursuing a knowledge (co)production approach that builds capacity and capability in communities along the research value chain, towards a strengthened knowledge democracy. These principles are informed by a shared philosophy of Ubuntu, which incorporates the values of trust, honesty, empathy, and accountability
3. Trans- and Inter-disciplinary knowledge production	Engaged Research encourages trans- and interdisciplinary knowledge (co)production driven by researchers from diverse academic disciplines while also being cognisant of the need for active transformation towards inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. This will foster a systematic, multi-perspective approach that will enhance Engaged Research towards more impactful deliberations between researchers and communities.
4. Ethics and sustainability	Engaged Research is governed by ethical standards that are applicable across academic disciplines; relevant to the social engagement processes throughout the research lifecycle; and act towards the intent of beneficence (do good) and non-malfeasance (do no harm) within the interdependent dimensions of a triple bottom line, including people, planet, and profit. Engaged research seeks to ensure the sustained longevity and transferability, across multiple contexts, of the desired beneficial impact of research, while ensuring that all participants, through a process of informed consent, have an unconditional right of withdrawal.
5. Relationship building	Engaged Research requires relationship and partnership building (initiated prior to research being conducted and is sustained downstream of knowledge production) over an often-extended period towards a long-term and future-oriented vision. Engaged Research requires capacity building throughout the full research value chain, which is retained as a basis of future engagement.

The change in the discourse of Higher Education in relation to societal partnerships heralds a transformation trajectory for universities nationally. The link between ethical philosophies, and the Vision and African aspirations for 2063 is evident in the call by the African Union. These seven aspirations indicate the discourse of sustainability, integration, respect, humanity, peace, justice, security, and resilience which is so prevalent in CE and which is gaining traction within the higher education landscape, policies, discourse, and strategies (African Union Agenda, 2063). The values and principles of ethical leadership are most relevant for CE.

Imperatives in ethical leadership

The King IV Report on Corporate Governance™ espouses values for ethical, responsible and effective leadership including ethical principles such as treating others as you would like to be treated and doing what is right even when no one is watching. The Bill of Rights enshrined in the South African Constitution affirms the values of freedom, equality and human dignity (Republic of South Africa, 1996). “These ethical values can be used in community engagement to guide decision-making, conduct, the relationship between organisations, stakeholders, and broader society” (Ferguson, 2019, p.176). All CE practitioners must be regarded as ethical leaders who consider ethical values when involved in community engagement projects. Individual ethical behaviour should additionally reflect the values and ethics of the organisation they represent. What are values in ethics? The researchers suggest that the following definition: “Values inspire, motivate and engage people to discharge obligations or duties” (Schroeder et al., 2019, p.13) is appropriate to CE. Values in ethics in the context of CE such as Transparency; Fairness; Accountability; and Competence are discussed below:

Transparency

Transparency in the way CE partners exercise roles and responsibilities. Transparency implies making visible and disclosing information, intentions and behaviour to all engaged in the CE project. Turilli & Floridi (2009, p.105) argue that “transparency is a pre-condition for either enabling or constraining other ethical principles”. In CE the project leader is tasked to ensure that information is disclosed upfront in a meaningful and truthful manner so that it can be understood by all. This information should disclose any risks and/or benefits to the participants and their environment. Any concerns should be mentioned upfront and any change in the project communicated openly.

Fairness

Fairness by adopting a stakeholder-inclusive response. Schroeder et al. (2019, p.20) describe four types of fairness: “Fairness in exchange, where there is equity between the parties; Distributive fairness, sharing of scarce resources; Corrective fairness, which rights a wrong; and Retributive fairness, applying a sanction appropriate for the wrong”. Fairness may be considered when selecting partners for the CE project, especially when there may be a tangible benefit to the community partner.

Accountability

Accountability by being willing to provide answers for areas of responsibility. Accountability is an important construct for enhancing ethical leadership. It involves self-accountability by introspecting on one’s beliefs and feelings, and self-awareness by reflecting and evaluating your own performance and behavior and that of others (Ghanem & Castelli, 2019, p.5). A CE project leader is accountable for the actions and behaviour of the rest of the CE project

team. A self-accountable project leader that acts with integrity and honesty will earn trust and inspire the rest of the project team. An accountable project team's primary concern and focus must be on protecting the rights and the interests of the community.

Competence

Competence implies having sufficient knowledge, skills, and acting with due care and diligence when performing tasks; and acting with integrity and good faith (Adhikari et al, 2020, p.6). Ethical competence is acquired through gaining knowledge and experience (Hemberg & Hemberg, 2020, p.1256). CE projects in higher education rely on academic staff to plan, guide and lead CE projects with students. Academic staff are often discipline-specific subject experts (for example, Engineering) and may lack the broader leadership competencies required for CE. The types of leadership competencies needed to manage and oversee CE projects may include community collaboration, relationship and network development, project management and organisational awareness. CE projects require a supportive organizational environment that can coordinate and sanction projects within the higher education institution to ensure that the potential competency leadership gaps are filled before the engagement.

Sustainable development is a key outcome of ethical leadership when engaging in community engagement. Sustainable development is recognizing that higher education institutions are an integral part of the societal landscape. There needs to be corporate social responsibility and stakeholder inclusivity to ensure that the present needs are met without compromising the ability to meet future community engagement project's needs. An integrated approach considers society, the economy, and the environment as equal to create sustainable value.

Shared value proposition

Knowledge creation is not the sole purview of academics and learners. "The global network has produced knowledge in different ways by different people and students should respond ethically to the knowledge of others before formulating their own position" (Osman and Petersen, 2013, p.3). The value proposition in Table 2 denotes how CE extends from the primary stakeholders, that being the student, the lecturer and the community, to the higher education institution.

The CE experience for the student shifts the focus away from books and lecturers as the source of knowledge, to learn through and from the shared life experiences of less formally educated, often older members of the community. This privileged transformative learning experience must be guided by ethical principles. The learning institution benefits by having graduates that are aware of their ethical obligations to society. There is a moral and ethical duty for the lecturer to develop learners beyond the narrow content driven disciplinary outcomes. CE provides the opportunity for learners to develop a sense of more ethical citizenship by responding to the daily issues facing many communities (poverty,

unemployment, crime, etc.) (Osman and Petersen, 2013, p.12). The higher education institution will benefit from supporting staff engaged in CE.

CE projects become meaningful and sustainable when communities are given co-ownership and can identify with the project goals. "This requires the learners and lecturers to immerse themselves in the community and accept that there will be reciprocal learning" (Du Plessis & Van Dyk, 2013, p.62). The higher education institution benefits from becoming a resource to the community.

Table 2: Shared Value Proposition. Source: Authors' construction

Stakeholders	Value for Stakeholders	Value for Higher Education Institution
Students	Meaningful life experiences	Enhance the learning opportunities outside the walls of the classroom
Lecturers	Satisfaction of attaining educational goals	Engaged, motivated university employees
Communities	Take ownership and derive meaningful benefit from the engagement	Reputation; brand value; trust; access to communities

Ethics Application to CE Projects

A useful framework to apply when thinking through ethical considerations at a level of planning and executing community engagement projects, is that of Beauchamp and Childress's "four principles" – non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, and autonomy (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001). Although these principles were developed in the context of medical bioethics, their value as guiding ethical principles has been recognised more broadly in a variety of concepts. Gillon (2003, p. 308) described the generality of the application of these principles as follows:

> "[T]he four principles should also be thought of as the four moral nucleotides that constitute moral DNA – capable, alone or in combination, of explaining and justifying all the substantive and universalisable moral norms of health care ethics and I suspect of ethics generally!"

Non-Maleficence

Non-maleficence refers to a moral obligation "not to inflict harm on others," and is strongly associated with the latin maxim "primum non nocere" – first, do no harm (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001, p. 113). Where one's actions create risk towards others, this moral obligation finds expression in the creation of a legal duty of care. Legal culpability may arise where one's actions caused harm, and one failed to foresee that harm and/or failed to take adequate steps to prevent it, in circumstances where a reasonable person would

have done so. When planning and implementing community engagement initiatives, effective risk management is therefore both an ethical and a legal imperative. This entails a deliberative process of: (a) anticipating and assessing risks, (b) planning to avoid such risks, and (c) actively mitigating residual risks that cannot be entirely avoided or prevented.

Ideally, these steps should be documented in a risk mitigation plan for each project, which can be referred to and supplemented, as necessary. A risk mitigation plan should ideally include a matrix in terms of which individual risks are classified and scored based on (a) the likelihood of the harm taking place, and (b) the probable severity of the harm in the event of it occurring. The scoring, based on a combination of both criteria, enables the prioritisation of risks for purposes of attention and resource allocation. Such a plan provides both an important guide to activities, as well as a key piece of evidence of due care having been taken as a defence against potential liability in the unfortunate event of the occurrence of harm. The nature of potential harm could be physical, psychological, social, economic, or environmental. In thinking through potential risks, it is important that risks are considered not only to individuals, but also to communities, institutions, the public and the environment.

Beneficence

The ethical principle of beneficence demands that not only are we ethically required to avoid causing harm to others, but we must also positively act for the benefit of others or, worded differently, to "help others further their important and legitimate interests" (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001, p. 166). To act with beneficence, we must work towards achieving the highest possible benefit to others, after weighing up the costs, harms, and benefits of our actions.

This principle requires that the conceptualisation and implementation of community engagement initiatives must be done with an awareness of the need to ensure that all stakeholders affected thereby enjoy the highest possible benefit from it. To put this into action, planning a community engagement initiative should involve mapping participating and affected stakeholders and endeavouring to optimise the net benefit/value-add to each stakeholder. Win-win relationships should be sought, and without a clear net benefit to a stakeholder, the terms should be reconsidered and potentially restructured.

The principle of beneficence also requires that we endeavour to additionally add value to the economy, the environment, and society in general. These broader benefits, as well as the benefits to specific stakeholders, should be sustainable as far as possible to optimise value-add into the future.

Justice

The concept of justice encapsulates both principles of fairness and "distributive justice," which refers to "fair, equitable and appropriate distribution determined by justified norms that structure the terms of social cooperation" (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001, p. 226). In

the context of community engagement, the principle of justice accordingly dictates that we act with fairness in dealing with all stakeholders.

It also demands that the extensive resources invested by communities in such initiatives (including local knowledge, skills, time, facilities, and networks) are recognised and acknowledged, and that there is a commensurate investment of resources from the higher education institutions engaged in such initiatives. Failure to do so is unjust, and can result in exploitation, abuse, resentment, and a breakdown of trust between institutions and communities. This point needs to be impressed on all involved in the CE process at universities, including management, staff and students.

Autonomy

The last of the four principles is that of autonomy. Beauchamp and Childress (2001) state that autonomy presupposes existing conditions of liberty (independence from controlling forces) and agency (capacity for intentional action). Respect for autonomy requires not only a respectful attitude, but respectful action too. This entails acknowledging the decision-making rights of others and, in some cases, acting positively to enable others to act autonomously by creating conditions conducive to the exercise of autonomous choice and developing agency among others. In the context of CE, the principle of autonomy accordingly demands that we –

- respect the intrinsic worth of every stakeholder and participant in the initiative.
- recognise the power imbalances that exist, and that we are intentional about addressing them; and
- create spaces and apply tools which promote agency, rather than entrenching institutional power.

As an example of application of this principle, standardised "partnership agreements" developed by institutions for community organisations to sign to formalise partnerships tend to negate the agency and autonomy of community partners. We propose that partnership arrangements start with a blank page and that agreements are allowed to emerge from discussion and joint planning processes – a process we refer to as "radical conversational consensus."

The process is conversational, in the sense that agreement emerges from conversation between the partners. It is radical, both in the sense that it may be a significant departure from current practice, but also because of its transformational power to build agency, mutual respect, and trust.

The transformational power of reaching consensus through conversation is illustrated by the experimental research of Sievers et al (2020). They found that the neural activity of members of groups became more aligned after conversation, with distinctive patterns of alignment reflecting the unique discussion of the group. The power of conversation to

achieve consensus and alignment between stakeholders in CE processes should therefore not be underestimated.

Recommendations and conclusion

The Higher Education sector should be cognisant of ethical challenges within the context of CE projects, programmes and partnerships. Relevant approaches in pursuit of ethical CE should be considered as critical for universities. The recommendations and concluding discussion are based on the above review of the various sections highlighted in this article and the experiences of the authors in the CE field. The recommendations below can contribute to enhancing the ethical stances and practices of future CE within universities:

- Universities should continue to look at strengthening and building on existing frameworks and guidelines to foster more ethical approaches to engagement like the new National Research Foundation (NRF) Engaged Research Framework.
- There is a need for universities to revisit and transform policies that are self-serving and that do not allow spaces for negotiation and discourse for all project participants.
- Policy gaps should be identified and addressed by universities to ensure that ethical principles in CE practices are maintained.
- CE Partners should be involved in CE policy development, frameworks and guidelines.
- Universities should heed the call for consciousness to “do no harm” – not just for the university, but also for all project participants by applying Beauchamp and Childress’s “four principles” which are non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, and autonomy (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001).
- CE practitioners and researchers should explore frameworks like: Transdisciplinary and integrated approaches which support ethical considerations and more equitable engagement between the university and its partners.
- An option for universities would be to establish CE Ethics committees to process CE project applications for alignment with ethical standards. This committee could also advise and support CE applicants and should include external university partners like government and communities.

The building of ethical partnerships between universities and their partners will strengthen the sustainability of the project and the partnership. One approach could be posing pertinent questions regarding ethical approaches and practices for CE such as:

- How can we institutionalise ethical approaches for CE?
- How can we integrate ethical CE principles and approaches into the curriculum?
- Which policies are required at the university to ensure ethical compliance?

Ethical values and leadership principles as espoused in the King IV Report on Corporate Governance™ are clearly relevant for CE practitioners, programme and project leaders. Any unique ethical dilemma that arises during a project for which there are no guidelines will require the CE project team to consult and seek professional advice if time and circumstances allow. An immediate response to an ethical dilemma that arises during a CE project will require the project team to be guided by the "four principles" to make the best decision. The CE team can:

- consider practical responses to ethical dilemmas which may arise during the planning, implementation and evaluation of a CE project.
- agree with partners on CE ethical guidelines prior to the project which can help to provide immediate answers to ethical dilemmas that may arise in the field during the implementation of the CE project.

Applying ethical principles in CE as the authors propose can be challenging for the university and for its partners. Building ethical partnerships requires time, additional competencies within CE project teams, consciousness of power dynamics and a commitment to the transformation of systems and policies that are solely biased towards the interests of the university. Meaningful and ethical engagement calls for an understanding and awareness of the ethical imperatives in CE as argued by this article. Striving towards the building of sustainable relationships within CE quintuple helix teams, which are guided by sound ethical principles, can lead to true and authentic engagement between universities and their societal partners.

In conclusion, the consideration of ethical imperatives is strongly advocated together with the associated theoretical and philosophical underpinnings for CE partnerships and relationships so that all participants are recognised and included in decision-making, conceptualisation, implementation, and reflection of CE initiatives. This requires a conscious effort by universities to create policies and practices which speak to ethical imperatives.

Notes on Contributors

Lead author

Jacqueline Scheepers
Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Units, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Bellville, South Africa
scheepersj@cput.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5346-5176

Co-author
Lloyd Denzil Christopher
Department of Emergency Medical Sciences, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Bellville, South Africa
lloydc@cput.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8072-7634

Co-author
Stephen Harrison
Private Attorney, Harrison Law, Cape Town, South Africa
stephen@harrisonlaw.co.za

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Learning in the context of partnership: Trainee and intern psychologists' reflections on community-based service learning

Jacqueline Akhurst, **Nqobile Msomi**, and **Anneliese Maritz**, Rhodes University, South Africa

Abstract

For a number of years, community-based service learning (CBSL) has been a key element of the Community Psychology module in the Master's programme for training psychologists at Rhodes University. In 2022, CBSL was consolidated to become central to the whole programme, with a focus on providing services in a partnership with the Assumption Development Centre (ADC). After introducing a model showing how students gradually move from sensitisation to social justice issues at undergraduate levels towards conscientisation as postgraduates, this paper will reflect on the interface between the professional training programmes and the community-based partnership with the ADC. Following a brief background about the partnership's development, we describe the structure of the CBSL and its integration into the curricula. We provide evidence of its impact on both the first-year master's students, and the second year Counselling Psychology Interns. These data draw from the trainee psychologists' reflections, as reported in the Rhodes Psychology Clinic 2022 Annual Report; and the Intern Psychologists' reflections, integrated into the 2022 ADC Counselling Hub Annual Report. A thematic analysis of the reflections illustrates the commonalities in the accounts of learning, as well as the deepened insights and shifts evident in the accounts. The reported reflective learning is then considered both practically and theoretically, with recommendations for further development.

Keywords: *Community-based service learning (CBSL); training psychologists; building partnerships; psychology internships; postgraduate learning*

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Introduction

The term community-based service learning (CBSL) seems to have first emerged in the literature when used by Hammersley (2012). It was coined as an adapted term from critiques of forms of service learning (SL) as applied in the United States (USA) (e.g., Mitchell, 2008; Sandy & Holland, 2006), where the focus appeared to be more uni-dimensional: on the benefits for students rather than for the target community groups; and highlighting the likelihood of uneven power relations between academic stakeholders and their partners. Blouin and Perry (2009) identified three of the main obstacles in SL as "issues related to student conduct, poor fit between course and organizational objectives, and lack of communication between instructors and organizations" (p.120). They conclude that it is important that SL both leads to effective student learning as well as providing "valuable service to community-based organizations" (p.120).

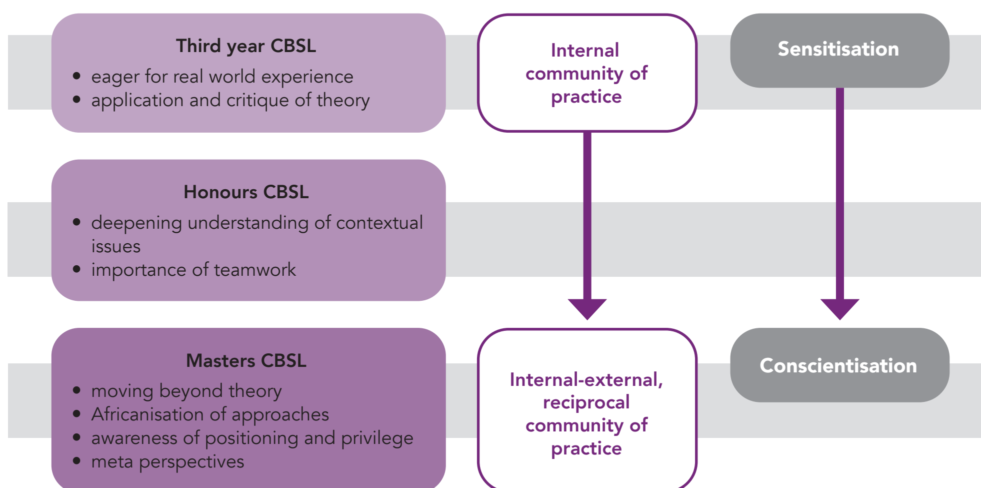
Drawing from the fields of community-based learning (CBL, as synthesised by Owens and Wang, 1996) and the parallel literature developing in community-based research (e.g., Stoecker, 2009), CBSL foregrounds the partners' perspectives and challenges, building upon the principles of reciprocity and collaboration, to guard against neo-colonialist ideologies (Hammersley, 2012). Chika-James et al. (2022) however still note that when "assessing the impact of service-learning, most studies focus on its effects on students' learning than community partners and the communities served; leaving largely unanswered the question of whether service-learning … contributes value to community organizations and the wider society" (p.1). CBSL thus strives to remedy the skewed focus by foregrounding the community partnership that forms the basis of the work and previous research by the authors (Akhurst & Msomi, 2022) focused on three case studies of partnerships, to be described further on.

Whilst there is an extensive international literature base related to service learning for undergraduate students, its applications at postgraduate (or "graduate") levels has been less widely reported (Roe, 2023) until more recently. A brief review of a cross-section of recent studies illustrates the growing diversity of its applications for postgraduates: Gunaratna et al. (2007) report on graduate-led statistical consulting for community organisations in the USA; Salleh et al. (2018) compare the experiences of undergraduate and postgraduate students in Malaysia; Levkoe et al. (2020) write of CBSL in the graduate field of planning studies in Canada; and Torrecilla et al. (2020) discuss its integration into technological doctoral education in Spain. As applied more specifically to professional programmes, where trainees strive to develop practice skills (as in the medical disciplines or education), links are increasingly being made to CBSL. For example, De Bonis (2015) researched the impact on graduate nursing students in the USA; Roe (2021) reports on students' experiences in a media advocacy programme, also in the USA; and Puntil et al. (2022) write of the implementation of CBSL for Master's students based in the United Kingdom to promote mental health during COVID-19. However, the articles cited here tend towards being descriptive, with little evidence of more critical and social justice-led approaches to CBSL.

In the past two decades in South Africa (SA), practice in and research reports of CBSL have gradually increased, following the directive in the White Paper on Transformation of Higher Education (DoE, 1997) that universities should promote community engagement as part of their social responsibilities. The innovative Community-Higher Education-Service Partnerships (CHESP) initiatives in 12 universities in the early 2000s (Lazarus, 2007) prompted a number of models that could be followed. The CHESP programme ended in 2007 and one of its products was a comprehensive guide for academics, produced by the Council for Higher Education (Bender et al., 2006). Having been involved in one of these earlier projects, the first author has researched forms of CBSL at various levels of study and in different contexts (e.g. Akhurst & Mitchell, 2012; and Akhurst, 2016). Theoretically, the CHESP initiatives often drew from experiential learning. Stanton and Erasmus (2013) illustrate some resonances between the USA-based and African philosophical ideas, providing a rationale for the work: "Dewey and Nyerere expected education to enable individuals to understand and relate to the world in which they live in ways that would ultimately contribute to its transformation for the better" (p.82).

A team investigating a cross-section of students' CBSL learning experiences at UKZN across cohorts (Akhurst et al., 2016), gathered data from focus groups of students at three levels of study (third year undergraduate, Honours and Master's by research). The findings highlighted students' experiences of applying psychological theory to real life situations, as well as 'giving something back' to the community groups with whom they worked. They also reported learning to work in respectful and participatory ways, and being challenged to problem-solve. This research led to the development of the following model, which illustrates the incremental changes apparent in students' accounts of their learning as they progressed from one level of study to the next.

Figure 1: Experiences of CBSL across three programme levels (Akhurst et al., 2016)



On the left, the three blocks reflect the key themes that were identified in the students' accounts at each level, illustrating progress in deepening conceptualisations and insights, represented on the right as shifts from 'sensitization' to 'conscientization' (Friere, 1970). Here sensitization refers to the undergraduate students displaying increased awareness of and insights into the conditions and difficulties encountered by people in disadvantaged situations. Conscientization takes this process of insights further, by leading to a more critical understanding of one's positioning and social injustices, with changes reported in cognitive constructs and commitment to actions in response. This indicates a gradual development of ideas about social justice, starting from sensitisation towards conscientisation, with evidence at Master's level of a greater sense of working towards social justice, whereas at third year the focus was on the support and learning from each other as peers (in an 'internal community of practice'). By Master's level the relationships with external partners had increased in importance and there was a greater sense of exchange and reciprocity.

In the international CBSL literature, such changes in awareness, understanding and motivation have been reported by for example: Bahammam and Bahammam (2023) based in Saudi Arabia, used Schwartz's (2002) model in their study of the impact of CBSL on senior dental students' experiences; and Ricke (2021) who applied Perry's (1998) four-stage scheme of students' intellectual and ethical development. Perry's four stages were identified as students' learning being on a continuum that moves from "dualism", through "multiplicity" and then "relativism", to "commitment" in more advanced students who have engaged in reflection on their own positioning. Ricke (2021) writes that for undergraduate students, CBSL can "stretch comfort zones [and] can help lead to a transformative … experience for students in terms of cognitive and civic growth if other course design factors are in place" (p. 22). She notes that the course design needs to carefully balance the potentially "disorienting" experiences of working in community settings with feedback from tutors that is supportive. Schwartz's (2002) model refers to students' attitudes in CBSL, where students first experience "activation", becoming aware of others' needs; they then respond by displaying "obligation" due to their empathy; the situation is then re-assessed and students may move through a stage of "defen-se"; before the final "response" where they become more intentional in their activities. The latter model would seem to resonate with the identification of the shifts from sensitization towards conscientization as reported by Akhurst et al. (2016).

A theoretical perspective

Theoretically as authors, we are very aware of the need to situate ourselves "here" (Ratele et al., 2019) within a decolonial Africa(n)-centred Community Psychology, concerned with the fundamental influences of systems on the intra-individual and interactive aspects of people's functioning. The term Africa(n)-centred Community Psychology follows the exposition of Ratele and Malherbe (2022), where psychologists are encouraged to "situate and think" (p. 13) both Africa as a continent, considering all its diversity, as

well as foregrounding African people's worldviews and positioning, towards promoting psychosocial change. From this perspective, mental health and distress are viewed as being largely shaped by the physical, social, economic environments in which people live (World Health Organisation, 2014), due to limited access to both material and symbolic resources. Such an approach focuses on promoting people's wellbeing, especially for those who have been affected by historic and persistent discrimination and oppression, with social justice as a foundational principle (Ratele et al., 2022). It recognises that power is exercised in ways that maintain privilege, leading to discrimination against particular groups (Fisher et al., 2007). A decolonial approach to psychology eschews the dominant post-positivist influences of Euro-American versions of the discipline. In order to intervene therefore, explicitly values-based and participatory work, through forging alliances and building reciprocal consciousness, is recommended (Ratele et al., 2022). The resultant collaborative work draws from the expertise and knowledges of all participants, actively rethinking and reconstructing systems of knowledge and practice, from the perspective of the marginalised majority. This leads to the possibilities of transformed relationships and collective action (Kagan et al., 2020). Thus, a participatory constructivist paradigm informs the exploratory research to be reported below.

This paper aims to further add to the evidence-derived model (Akhurst et al., 2016) described earlier. Based upon inductive, qualitative underpinnings, it will provide evidence reflecting on the interface between the Master's level professional training programmes in psychology and a potentially ground-breaking community-based partnership, expanded to also include Intern Counselling Psychologists (in their final year of refining practice before qualifying). We hope to offer insights into these postgraduates' experiences and learning in a community setting that could contribute to the dialogues on transformative change in the training of psychologists in South Africa.

CBSL at Master's degree level

CBSL has been embedded into the Community Psychology module in the Master's level programme training psychologists at Rhodes University (RU) for a number of years. Accounts of these developments may be found in various publications (e.g., Akhurst, 2017; Akhurst & Msomi, 2022). The CBSL was designed to provide structured opportunities for students to apply theoretical learning to practice, in socially responsive ways, with the intention of producing psychologists who would then be more likely to promote and integrate work towards social justice into their practices. Research into the previous form of CBSL from 2015 – 2020, as described in Akhurst & Msomi (2022), evidenced the community members' reports of the value of the work of the Master's students who provided psychological services through their CBSL, not accessible through other channels of service delivery. The partners appreciated the student's time investments, competence in consultative planning of their interventions, the customised materials that were used (mainly in groupwork) and their professionalism on site.

These aspects were all based on the foundational element of relationships that were built and established over time, through working together. The research findings illustrated the possibilities of building collaborative approaches and diffusing power differentials, which were appreciated by partners. These CBSL partnerships were thus concerned with addressing the influences of various systemic crises (especially related to poverty, inadequate schooling and inequality of opportunities) on young people's well-being. However, the work was limited to engagement at micro-systemic levels and, due to the limited time periods of the work and the students' low status as trainees, they were unable to influence broader systems to lead to longer-lasting changes or sustainability.

In brief, through a re-curriculation process in 2021 against a backdrop of seeking to further shift the predominantly westernised curriculum towards being more Africa(n)-centred as described earlier, the module-confined form of CBSL was expanded to become a core element of the respective curricula, as summarised below in figure 2. It impacted on three programmes: (i) year 1 of Counselling Psychology, where the Community Psychology module was key to providing the principles of practice and encouraging interventionist approaches; (ii) year 1 of Clinical Psychology, with the focus on Public Mental Health providing the framework into which the practice was integrated; and (iii) year 2 of Counselling Psychology, during which the trainees who worked as Interns at the student Counselling Centre (CC), were each released on rotation in blocks of 7-9 weeks, to be based at the community partner's premises.

Figure 2: Cohorts, levels of study and associated programmes and modules

Year of Master's study	Short-name	Cohort of students
Year 1 (theory / practice)	M1	Counselling (module: Community Psychology) / Clinical (module: Public Mental Health)
Year 2 (practicum)	M2	Counselling Interns (released on rotation from CC)

The modules provided the students with theoretical frameworks (derived from the disciplines of Community Psychology and Public Mental Health as applied in SA), to inform their approaches to psychological intervention on site, challenging many traditional individually-focused biomedical conceptions, to promote health and wellbeing. Key topics for M1s were taught in the initial term of their programme, to prepare them to engage in weekly casework in the community setting from April until October. Funds were also raised to support the release of each M2 to work in the community setting for a block of eight to nine weeks, to compensate for their time at the CC and to cover the extra supervision needed for an hour per week. CBSL has thus been consolidated as central to the programmes through re-design of the curricula, with its focus being provision of services for individuals and groups through the work of the M1s attending the centre each week, supported by the on-site M2 Intern psychologists, within the partnership as described below.

Background to the partnership

The Assumption Development Centre (ADC) is a registered Non-profit Organisation (NPO) with the SA Department of Social Development (169-204 NPO), founded in 2014 and located in the Joza community, which is on the Eastern side of the city of Makhanda. Because of South Africa's socio-political histories, those categorised as Black mostly still reside in the Joza Township area. Funding and partnerships of the ADC are formed with a variety of profit and non-profit organisations, foundations and institutions. The ADC became a partner organisation of the RU Psychology Clinic in 2022, with the initiative focused towards providing a Counselling Hub in Joza, to meet the extensive needs for services there (as described in Akhurst & Msomi, 2022). Briefly, the partnership is rooted in a rich history of relationship-building, dating back to the founding of a smaller counselling service for learners in a nearby secondary school and the previously established Youth Hub, as well as some earlier careers-related work at ADC with a group of unemployed youth. Then, during the 2020 COVID pandemic, online counselling support sessions were provided by the second author for school leaders, educators, and learners, which formed further links to the partnerships evolving around the site.

The collaboration with ADC evolved through discussions with and facilitation by the RU Psychology Clinic (coordinated by the second author throughout the time), the central RU Community Engagement Division and the RU Student Counselling Centre. The mission of the ADC is to transform the economy of Joza by supporting young people as they explore their business ideas (including provision of a second chance matric for a number of people). Over the past decade the ADC has supported the activation of 16 viable and sustainable businesses. The programmes at the ADC include business coaching, support and mentorship, legal advice, curriculum vitae and business plan development, financial literacy training and support, work placement opportunities, *Thabiso* Life Skills courses and *SaveAct* groups, to encourage financial planning and saving.

It was noted by our ADC partners that frequently the people accessing their programmes could have also benefitted from psychological assistance and counselling, but none of these services existed due to the legacy of unequal provision of services in the area. The focus of the partnership that has evolved is thus to address these needs, as identified by the ADC team, within their particular context, challenging trainee psychologists to work in collaboration to design and bring about interventions that meet the identified needs. Important Community Psychology principles that form the basis of this work include promoting the partner's agency in guiding the work, providing for a system that is sustainable and "giving psychology away" (Miller, 1969). The latter term refers to a psycho-educational approach in which the benefits of psychological research are actively disseminated to promote mental health and well-being, for the purpose of improving the quality of people's lives and thus to enhance societal relationships (Evans, 2020). The team adopted many of the features of partnership-building as described in Akhurst & Msomi (2022), including careful building of collaborative relationships; appreciating the knowledges and resources that each partner

brings to the process; and careful consultations through weekly and on-site engagements between the ADC team, the M2 trainees who offered peer support and the M1 students.

Although the research to follow might seem again to be focused on students' (or trainees') rather than our partner's perspectives (in contrast to the arguments made earlier), from the perspective of promoting the sustainability of this work (a key concern expressed by our ADC partners), through the ongoing provision of time and expertise from the trainee psychologists (who provided individual and group interventions throughout 2022), it was important to gather accounts of their learning and the value of their work at the ADC site, for both M1 and M2 placements. This paper thus considers the impact of CBSL on both the first year Master's students' learning, and the second year Counselling Psychology Interns' learning, by posing the research question: What is the evidence of learning through their work, in the feedback provided by the M1 and M2 trainee psychologists?

Methodology

Firstly, ethical approval for the study was granted (approval number 2023-5957-7392). The study was designed to be exploratory and its findings aimed to be preliminary to a more structured ongoing programme evaluation, over a period of time. The authors hoped to draw lessons from the experiences of the participants to understand how professional training in psychology might be moved further towards a more Africa(n)-centred approach.

Then, data were collected through purposive sampling of the published comments from the two cohorts involved at the ADC in 2022: the twelve M1s and the five M2s (of the 17 trainees, 15 were women and two were men, ages 25-45). These data were sourced from the trainee psychologists' reflections, as reported in the RU Psychology Clinic 2022 Annual Report; and the Intern Counselling Psychologists' reflections on their learning, which were integrated into the ADC Counselling Hub Annual Report for 2022. The trainees' reflections were part of individual and group processes of evaluating their experiences (Kolb, 1984) and these were not facilitated by any of the authors. This meant that the authors could not in any way bias the findings or skew the data towards the aims of this research. The data available was selected by others for the purposes of reporting to funders and the university. These data are therefore archival, because they were reported in documents available to the public, for which the contributors gave permission. The analysis was completed during April 2023.

A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the published reflections was done by the third author, who is broadly familiar with CBSL, but had not been involved in the partnership with ADC. This research decision was again to reduce any potential bias of the first two authors, who had been intimately involved in programme delivery during 2022. After the initial identification of themes, the three authors then conferred to further consolidate the findings. The aim of the analysis was to illustrate any commonalities between the trainees' reports of learning, as well as hoping to identify any deepened insights and shifts in their accounts of their experiences.

Findings

The main findings that became evident to the research team from the analysis of the students' and Interns' reflections were grouped into six themes: 1) Situated, contextual learning; 2) Academic learning; 3) Learning about the profession; 4) Building on university training; 5) Enhanced interpersonal effectiveness; 6) *Ubuntu* as expressed in "giving psychology away". Each of these will be expanded upon below, with quotations in speech marks that back up the assertions made.

Theme 1: Situated, Contextual Learning

The first theme identified in the data relates to evidence of the situated, contextual learning that was facilitated. The following excerpts reflect on this:

The ADC Counselling Hub gave students "the opportunity to take our practice out of the office into the community made our learning come alive even more" [M1].

An M2 said it had: "really inspired me to widen my lens way beyond that of an office space. Instead, working towards 'giving psychology away' as much as possible on as many platforms as possible, i.e. in schools and local clinics". Another M2 noted: "My greatest highlight was having the honour to serve".

Cooperation between staff at the ADC was highlighted, in isiXhosa this aspect is termed *ukubambisana*: "The staff were extremely helpful and assisted wherever possible … with setting up workshop spaces and printing advertisements. The team was also always on hand to assist with translation, when language barriers occurred" [M2]. This illustrates the collaborative work that resulted from the relationship-building.

The helpfulness of the two-way relationships, or *ukuncedisana* in isiXhosa, is illustrated in: "It has been fulfilling serving the community, working with the community members but also learning from them" [M2]. It is encouraging to see this reflection of reciprocal learning that was contextually rooted.

This first theme thus illustrates the learning based upon providing interventions in less formal community-centred and "real-life" environments. The M2s further expanded on the relationships that developed as engaged participatory practice, where their learning was about providing service through connecting their prior knowledge to this people-centred context, and where they appreciated mutual provision of assistance.

Theme 2: Academic Learning

Building on the above, the students and Interns gained experience of applying concepts from their university course to real-life situations by being out of their "comfort zones" (i.e., offices) [M1]. Through this they gained a deeper understanding of the theory learned "to evolve into value-laden praxis and a lived reality in terms of making psychological services accessible to all" [M2].

They appreciated the opportunity to build knowledge and manage an innovative pilot project where "we were both excited and nervous, as this meant that we would have to

start up and manage a project which was something new to us all" [M2]. Knowing that the placement meant that they needed to "think on their feet", where there were no prior guidelines, challenged them to move from application of prior learning to more informed praxis. This challenged them emotionally to manage any anxieties as they engaged, but also encouraged them to work both autonomously and collaboratively.

Theme 3: Learning about the profession

In stating: "I have learned the essence of building the plane while it is flying, and persevering and growing through the ups and downs of the process of building" [M1], a student identified the challenges of having to be inventive. Through their work they gained a deeper appreciation of what the profession might offer in such a setting: "my highlight is seeing the value of psychology as a profession in the Joza community" [M1]. The placement led to explorations of the potential roles of Counselling Psychologists in an atypical setting and of their ability to work effectively, by employing "a lot of knowledge and exposure in terms of working within a community but also in the field of psychology" [M2].

The Interns became sensitised to being responsive practitioners, skilled in adapting methods, for example: "Lessons were learnt in terms of what style of interventions would work best for the communities we were called to serve and this allowed us to set up more responsive systems" [M2]. This led to opportunities to use professional tools in innovative ways, for example: "I unexpectedly grew fond of conducting assessments" [M2].

In each of the above excerpts, an emergent professional identity is evident, as trainees saw the value of their skills and the application of their knowledge of psychology for the benefit of the clients with whom they worked.

Theme 4: Building on university training

The following excerpt highlights a student's account of experiencing CBSL outside of the confines of the university environment: "My greatest highlight was the work done at the ADC; being afforded the opportunity to engage with psychology in the multicultural context; and bringing psychology to communities outside of the Ivory Tower was rewarding and grounded me in my purpose" [M1]. This was satisfying for the student and reiterated for her the reason why she had engaged in training as a psychologist.

Looking ahead to becoming an independent practitioner in the following year, a trainee noted that "my time at ADC has equipped me with knowledge and skills that I would need if I were to have my own practice" [M2]. Another commented on the wide variety of roles and functions that she had experienced in her work at ADC: "I have been able to do child therapy, individual therapy, workshops, a trauma debriefing, provide psycho-education, act as a referral source as well conduct a cognitive assessment for my child client" [M2].

Drawing these ideas together, what emerges is the progress from being equipped with knowledge and skills in their M1 training towards greater ownership of these, wider experiences of roles, and the capacity to adapt when needed, as evidenced by the M2s.

Theme 5: Enhanced interpersonal effectiveness

In relation to specific competencies, several aspects were highlighted. For example, problem-solving skills were evident: "My greatest learning, especially at the ADC, was the experience of being pushed to access creativity when working in contexts where clients may not readily have material resources to navigate life challenges (e.g., having to include neighbours as client contact points for clients that do not have access to cell phones)" [M1].

Relational skills are identified in: "The support and guidance assisted me greatly in adjusting to the new environment and being able to work effectively. In addition, the working together of my managers at ADC and my supervisors … allowed me to work effectively" [M2].

Reiterating the satisfaction that was derived from overcoming challenges and providing psycho-education was noted: "Despite the growing pains we have encountered, I think the team has done incredibly well and has achieved our mandate of 'giving psychology away'" [M2].

There was also reference to becoming more reflective practitioners through their supervision, readings, and experiences: "I have learnt so much, not just in terms of my practice as an Intern but also about myself – XXX [name] is a fountain of knowledge, and through supervision sessions which included readings I could critically reflect upon, I have been able to explore various aspects of my role as an aspiring counselling psychologist" [M2].

Theme 6: Ubuntu as expressed in "giving psychology away"

In two of the themes above (1 and 5), trainees mentioned the importance to them of "giving psychology away". This was achieved through providing accessible psychological services to community members on site and near to their homes, because of trainees' concerns, as noted in "I believe it made us more accessible, and it also made it much easier to meet with clients where they felt more comfortable" [M1]. This was further reiterated: "it was rewarding to be able to work with the greater Makhanda community and to have the opportunity to serve outside of the Rhodes Counselling Centre" [M2]; in addition: "It has been meaningful in being able to make therapeutic services more accessible to the community of Makhanda" [M2]. These trainees therefore demonstrate their concerns for people who have lacked accessible psychological services and indicate the rewarding nature of being able to provide these.

In this theme, the foregrounding of aspects of relational caring as incorporated into the concept of *Ubuntu* (Letseka, 2012) was identified. Illustrating her compassion for the situations of many people, an Intern further noted that the provision of psychological services at the ADC Counselling Hub "truly felt like the thick of what many South African grapple with. I therefore had an appreciation for solution-focused therapy, which may prove relevant to a population like ours" [M2]. The latter emphasises the need for interventions that are useful if one perhaps only sees a client on one occasion.

The focus of the trainees also moved from individual people towards the systems that impact on people's circumstances, illustrating the need for social change, activism, and greater justice. One M2 noted the importance of "advocating for social justice, for learners in particular ... the importance of being a driver for social action to take place, and I feel as though I have served as an advocate for social justice". This highlights the participants' growing awareness of roles beyond the counselling room, prompted by their sensitivity to and care about people's concerns (emphasising the relational aspect of *Ubuntu*), to engage in social action for and on behalf of those whose voices are not heard in the corridors of power.

Discussion

The themes explored above are a start towards evidencing the work in transforming Psychology curricula for "here" (Ratele, 2019), to better fit the SA context. The identified themes resonate with some of the ideas of situated learning (Wenger, 1998), where active participation promotes learning through engagement in real-life problem-solving and social interactions. This occurred in the weekly meetings with ADC staff members, the trainees' weekly supervision sessions, as well as in the informal discussions that occurred on-site. This highlights the value of trainees drawing from and adapting their academic learning to a context very different from that of the university setting, as in Vygotsky's (1962) ideas of the bridging of scholarly and everyday or spontaneous learning. The findings also reflect some of the competencies debates in Community Psychology (e.g., Arcidiacono, 2017), where respectful and reciprocal relationships based upon mutual trust (expressions of *Ubuntu* in practice) are seen to be foundational to effective work. Furthermore, the practitioner needs to be sensitive to positionalities, learning to work with variations and diversity and, in the case of the ADC, being able to work multilingually (a skill that most trainees had already developed, prior to their training). This evidence thus complements some of the existing literature about CBSL in SA.

Referring back to figure 1, some of the accounts in the findings illustrate the development of "conscientization" (Freire, 1970) as the trainees engaged in participatory psycho-educational approaches, where psychology is "given away" (Miller, 1969). Furthermore, there is a sense of the trainees moving from one-sided more "charitable" approaches to the work towards deeper relational engagement; for example, the M1 accounts lack some of the depth or detail more evident in comments from the M2s, illustrating the continuity between the learning of M1s and M2s. The M1 accounts appear to be more limited to their own developing practice, whereas those of the M2s provide evidence of the interactive nature of the internal - external, reciprocal community of practice that was identified in figure 1. For the M2s the more prolonged exposure to these different ways of working (due to their immersion in the setting), has the potential to promote more active citizenship (as noted in Akhurst et al., 2016) and, in their accounts, there is evidence of trainees expressing solidarity with those who have experienced oppression through the system (Aron & Corne, 1996).

There is no doubt that trainees felt supported by their partners at ADC and RU. This emphasises a key element of an Africa(n)-centred psychology, which at its core expresses the importance of interpersonal relations linked to the ideals of *Ubuntu* (Mkabela, 2015). The findings resonate with Nguyen's (2016) emphases on the primacy of relationships, the reciprocity that then results from knowledge sharing and learning from each other, based upon the rigour of praxis that draws from and applies academic theories in real-life settings.

In relation to explicitly describing aspects of their learning, there is some evidence of similarities to earlier literature cited. For example, in themes 2 and 5, the trainees note some aspects of initial disorientation, as described by Ricke (2021), and one Intern noted the value of support from a supervisor to balance this. It is also clear from the comments, that many feel commitment (the final of the four stages identified by Perry, 1998) to working in similar non-traditional settings. Three of the four attitudes referred to be Schwartz (2002), namely activation (sensitivity to others' needs), obligation (prompted by their empathy to the situations of their clients) and response (being motivated to assist), are evident in trainees' reflections.

This study has a number of limitations. It was based on the reflections of only 17 trainees, who had experienced the first year of the establishment of a CBSL partnership with the ADC. Because the excerpts were all previously published in reports, they are mainly positive in nature. It would be valuable to be able to probe for more negative experiences in future feedback opportunities with trainees. Then, these reflections were mainly self-generated by the participants; therefore, further engagement with these ideas could have been enhanced by focus group discussions, facilitated by a researcher to explore the meanings further. This could be enhanced by specifically addressing the aspects of "abstract conceptualisation" and the "active experimentation" that follows (perhaps in group reflections), as explicated by Kolb (1984). The cross-sectional nature of the data collected also limited the identification of aspects of individual students' development over time. There is thus the need for the evaluative research to be expanded upon through follow-up studies, perhaps capturing information from the same trainees over a period of time.

In addition, from a critical Community Psychology perspective, a question may be justly asked about whether the work at ADC was transformative enough systemically? Clearly, the project is in its early days, and the route towards social justice is a long one, requiring sustained engagement and advocacy, because issues such as recognition, representation and redistribution need to be integrated into systems (Mapaling & Cherrington, 2022). There is limited evidence of some of the trainees becoming aware of an expanded role that includes advocacy for others (Naidoo et al., 2007), and the challenge for future trainees, as well as our partners in the ADC, is how to engage in appropriate activism for greater social action, especially with governmental departments whose mandate is to deliver better services for all. In addition, a concern of the ADC staff members is how to promote the sustainability of this form of CBSL, as developed in this project (*personal communication* Nduna, 2022). We hope that this article provides some evidence to persuade funders of the

value of this work, but we also realise that more evidence of the benefits of the work for the service users themselves needs to be captured and publicised.

An important concern also relates to the term "community" in both CBSL more broadly and as used in trainees' accounts. We are reminded that in the apartheid era, the term was used as a euphemism to support so-called "separate development" and thus the oppression of the majority (Carolissen, 2006). Community is not a term that refers only to areas that were previously disadvantaged and still show signs of impoverishment, but rather we all have links to communities of various sorts, whether to places geographically (e.g., neighbourhoods), through association with people who have similar interests or even through online and virtual connections. Kagan et al. (2020) use the term community as a verb, in ways that resonate with the findings reported above, foregrounding the active social ties of inter-relationships, for example of affection and interdependence, but also not being naïve about the negative possibilities of coercion and power dynamics that may be present in community-based interactions.

The social ties of affection (also a central feature of *Ubuntu*) form bonds that lead to concerns for one another's welfare, as expressed in several of the M2 excerpts. Where social ties are based upon interdependence (also noted in the accounts of collaborations and reciprocity in the findings), the social capital of bonding (Claridge, 2018) leads to stronger links that promote working together. Clearly, the relationships and bonds formed in the ADC partnership enabled the participants to pursue the initial objectives identified in the formative stage. The challenge, though, is how to reach outwards to develop bridges with other structures and groupings, as will be necessary for the ADC partnership in gaining support from governmentally funded entities in the geographic area surrounding the centre.

Conclusion

This article has described the impact of experiences in an innovative community-based practice setting on the training of Counselling Psychologists in SA. The learning that trainees report, based upon their work in partnership with the ADC staff, reveals the potential of what community-engaged, multicultural, Africa(n)-centred psychologies might look like. We hope that this article contributes to the limited CBSL literature on postgraduate students' learning; and to giving an account of an innovative project to extend the settings of Counselling Psychologists' training. The trainees' learnings were clearly multi-faceted, including more inward-facing learning about themselves, developing their skills and honing their professional identities, as well as more outward-facing learning in relationships with others (whether colleagues in the partnership or service-users) and concerning the design and implementation of interventions in non-traditional settings for psychologists (due to the contentious histories of Psychology). Ratele and Malherbe (2022, p.13) note the need for "positioning the psychological within social change efforts" and that this potentially contributes to "decolonising psychologies of community within and beyond Africa".

Community Psychology takes an unapologetic political stance, identifying where power lies and how it is exercised in ways that maintain privilege or discriminate against groups. The awareness of these issues needs to be explicitly incorporated into CBSL, in order for partnerships to be able to lead to transformations in people's lives as they move forward. Opportunities to rethink and reconstruct systems of knowledge and practice from the perspectives of the marginalised majority (Burton & Kagan, 2005) need to be optimised in these settings, and in the training of psychologists, to move towards imagined transformed societies (Kagan et al., 2020). Thus, Community Psychology could play further important roles in the decolonisation efforts towards a more relevant and applicable Africa(n)-centred psychology.

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Notes on Contributors

Lead author

Jacqueline Akhurst
Professor, Psychology Department, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa
J.Akhurst@ru.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1566-9092

Co-author

Nqobile Msomi
Psychology Department, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa
nqobilemsomi08@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9232-2028

Co-author

Anneliese Maritz
Psychology Department, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa
anneliese@mmaritz.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8759-7521

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On possibility: Exploring the connections between postcolonial feminism and community engagement in pursuit of university transformation

Claire McCann, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Abstract

Higher education institutions have historically enabled and aided epistemicide, or the marginalisation, annihilation and devaluing of the knowledge of those beyond university walls. Twenty-first century universities therefore face the important task of transforming teaching and research in ways that broaden epistemic access, incorporate various knowledge systems, and ensure local relevance. Here, academic feminism, especially postcolonial feminism, and community engagement may provide a way forward, as both projects serve to deconstruct the binary between 'knower' and 'non-knower', contributing to epistemic justice. In isolation, however, these projects have not yet made enough progress in pursuit of university transformation. This essay offers a preliminary exploration of the connections between community engagement and postcolonial feminism, and the ways in which a mutually beneficial relationship between the two may enhance each project's contribution to epistemic justice. It brings together literature on feminism and community engagement, linking this literature to the ideas of postcolonial feminism. Focus on postcolonial feminism specifically emerges from the recognition that universities do not only need to transform, but also decolonise. Ideas put forward in this writing are interspersed with my subjective memories and recollections of my lived experiences, spanning two universities and continents.

Keywords: *postcolonial feminism, community engagement, university decolonisation, epistemic justice, subjective experiences*

> Feminism is not a philosophy, or a theory, or even a point of view. It is a political movement to transform the world beyond recognition. It asks: what would it be to end the political, social, sexual, economic, psychological and physical subordination of women? It answers: we do not know; let us try and see. – *Amia Srinivasan*

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> If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together. – *Lilla Watson*

Introduction

Feminism and community-university engagement appear an unlikely pair, the former beginning as a grassroots social movement and the latter emerging from within higher education institutions as a means of bringing universities closer to the communities in which they are located. Yet both projects appear to hold potential: to deconstruct the binary formulated between the 'knower' (i.e., the individual accepted and incorporated into the university establishment) and 'non-knower' (the person or community whose knowledge remains marginalised and devalued) and thus contribute to epistemic justice. Both projects also face certain pitfalls, and have thus far been unable, in isolation, to realise this potential.

This essay offers a preliminary exploration of the connections between community engagement and postcolonial feminism, and the ways in which a mutually beneficial relationship between the two may enhance each project's contribution to epistemic justice in higher education institutions. Ideas put forward in this writing are interspersed with my subjective memories and stories of my lived experiences – these stories span two universities and continents. These stories serve to ground the ideas discussed, but also, because I identify this writing as feminist, they form part of an aim to document women's experiences, unearth other forms of (subjugated) knowledge, and contribute to social justice (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 4). Within a feminist paradigm, subjective experiences can be an important source of knowledge, especially for under-researched areas. Here, stories are a complex and legitimate way of making sense of self and others, and may expand the (often colonially designated) boundaries of what counts as meaningful inquiry (Ellis et al., 2011). Stories shared in this essay represent transformative moments and memories that have impacted my life.

I acknowledge limitations to this approach: my subjective experience may be inadequate as a tool for generalisation to other contexts and individuals. As a white, middle-class woman, I experience a multitude of privileges to which others do not have access. This privilege means that my experiences and interactions with other community members may introduce a power element that I am not fully able to understand. For this reason, I hope that the possibility of this connection between feminism and community engagement continues to be fleshed out by other individuals, associated with universities or the communities in which universities are located and embedded, so that more voices and stories will contribute to a deeper understanding of this topic.

The rest of this essay is structured as follows: I begin by assessing the role universities have historically played in enclosing knowledge, and explore recent engagement about the legacy of this epistemic injustice. Thereafter, I examine the liberatory possibilities as well as failures of feminist and community engagement projects at universities, with specific focus on engaged citizenry or volunteering. Finally, I consider the potential of a

mutually beneficial relationship between postcolonial feminist theorising and community engagement practice in higher education transformation.

Universities as sites for knowledge enclosure and epistemic injustice

Hall and Tandon (2017, p. 8) reflect that the creation of medieval universities 'was an act of enclosing knowledge, limiting access to knowledge, exerting a form of control over knowledge and providing a means for a small elite to acquire this knowledge'. They argue that:

> those within the walls become the knowers; those outside the walls become the non-knowers [...] The enclosing of the academy dispossessed the vast majority of knowledge keepers, forever relegating their knowledge to witchcraft, tradition, superstition, folkways, or, at best, some form of common sense (Hall & Tandon, 2017, p. 8).

Historically, higher education institutions have enabled and aided epistemicide, or the marginalisation, annihilation and devaluing of the knowledge of those beyond the walls of universities (De Sousa Santos, 2014). Those excluded include knowers in the Global South, especially former colonies; women, who have historically been denied university education; and other marginalised groups (De Sousa Santos, 2014). Universities create epistemic communities through credentialed discourses of expertise, separating higher education research from other epistemologies, thereby degrading and side-lining knowledge creators and constructors existing outside the academy (Bezerra et al., 2021). In this way, universities contribute to epistemic injustice – a form of injustice that marginalises certain forms of knowledge and denies certain individuals and groups their status as knowledge creators (Fricker, 2007, p. 1). Fricker (2007) indicates that two aspects comprise this epistemic injustice. Firstly, *testimonial injustice* emerges from prejudice in the 'economy of credibility' whereby some speakers are considered less legitimate as knowledge creators than others (Fricker, 2007, p. 5). Secondly, *hermeneutical injustice* refers to a 'gap in collective interpretive resources', putting certain individuals at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their lived experiences (Fricker, 2007, p. 7).

Signs of this enclosure of knowledge, designation of 'legitimate' knowers, and narrowing of what counts as 'legitimate' knowledge remain prevalent at Oxford, the university from which I write. Oxford's colleges, where students live, eat, drink, and learn, remind one of fortresses or castles, initially designed to protect the scholars and fellows within, while excluding the community beyond university walls. Hall and Tandon (2017) remark of their experience visiting Oxford that:

> One enters the college in question through a low doorway, only accessible to students and fellows and their guests [...]. While staying in the college, the connection between the enclosing of previously common land for private purposes and the creation of walled places for learning became disturbingly apparent (p. 8).

This distinction between 'knowers' within the confines of colleges and 'non-knowers' beyond these confines continues to assert itself, reflected in the city's sharp physical, economic, and social divides.

Here, I recently completed a Masters in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, a notoriously underfunded (in 2016, there were no salaried posts for this MSt at Oxford, and in 1993 the slogan 'Women's Studies: Oxford's cheapest faculty', was printed on badges worn by Oxford's Women's Studies Committee) but wonderfully subversive subject at one of the original sites for the enclosure of knowledge (Duan, 2016). My time at Oxford has been enhanced by my participation in and leading of *Uncomfortable Oxford* walking tours in the city. These tours open discussion and engagement about Oxford beyond its 'dreaming spires', about its failure or lack of willingness to engage with the community surrounding the university, and the various forms of exclusion and alienation that current students, whose social identities mean that they were previously constructed as 'non-knowers', face. From his position atop Oriel College on Oxford's High Street, the notorious statue of Cecil Rhodes looks down on students and community members passing by.

The vantage point from my *alma mater* in South Africa is not dissimilar, the two institutions linked by their connection to the figure of Rhodes. Initially funded by the Rhodes Trust, Rhodes University, located in the city of Makhanda, emerged as an institution designed to 'extend and strengthen the Imperial Idea in South Africa' (Currey, 1970, p. 12). Even in the 'postcolonial' and 'post-apartheid' moment, many members of the Makhanda community, where the university resides, lack access to Rhodes University, both as knowledge consumers, in terms of gaining admission to the university as undergraduate students, and knowledge constructors, with respect to the lack of esteem and belonging they may experience even after becoming members of the university. The university has established various programmes to ameliorate and transform this exclusion, which I elaborate on later in this essay, but problems related to belonging and alienation may persist.

This experience is not unique to Rhodes University. In South Africa, Bezerra et al. (2021) argue that this epistemic injustice continues to manifest as an apartheid of knowledge, where only privileged groups are allowed to partake in the country's production of knowledge. Recent student activism, represented by the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall movements respectively, has begun to make visible and challenge this injustice, and notably calls for decolonisation and universal access to higher education (Bozalek et al., 2018). Demands for free, quality, and decolonised education have ushered in a period of 'national [...] soul-searching' about the function of universities in post-apartheid South Africa (Brink, 2021, p. 5).

These calls for decolonisation and transformation deserve attention, especially at the universities that were initially conceptualised as mechanisms to further imperial agendas. Universities created during the colonial and apartheid periods were designed to protect white hegemony and educate an elite minority. A racial hierarchy underpinned higher education institutions whereby 'white' (historically advantaged institutions) and 'Black'

or 'Bantustan' (historically disadvantaged institutions) were categorised in a hierarchy dictating the quality of knowledge transacted at universities, the government resources directed at institutions, and the quality of graduates produced (Lange, 2021, p. 277). These universities face the important task of transforming learning, teaching and research in ways that broaden epistemic access, incorporate various knowledge systems, and ensure local relevance (Bawa, 2021, p. 197). Beyond South Africa, Hall and Tandon (2017, p. 13) argue that twenty-first century universities need to transform into *knowledge democracies*, which acknowledge and affirm multiple epistemologies, emphasise the importance of open access for the creation and sharing of knowledge, and build, transform and apply knowledge for human development for all.

Feminism in higher education: transformative possibilities and pitfalls

The shift towards a knowledge democracy requires broadened participation and responsiveness to societal needs (Bawa, 2021, p. 197), recognition that various forms of knowledge generation occur outside of university walls, and an orientation by higher education institutions towards social justice in their teaching and research efforts.

Challenges to universities' monopoly over knowledge production, and alternative, more inclusive imaginings, are not new. Before taken up by the academy, for example, feminism was a social movement concerned with understanding and dismantling structured power relations and intersecting systems of oppression (Webb et al., 2007, p. 238). Feminist theorisation historically represents a form of knowledge production emerging from outside of higher education institutions, from which women were denied access. Rooted in activism, feminism begins with an understanding of the self as an agent of change, and a commitment to dismantle the various interlocking systems of oppression that keep women in subordinate positions (Webb et al., 2007, p. 243). Since this inception, feminism has become a multifaceted and somewhat nebulous term with respect to its varieties and their competing self-definitions. Furthermore, feminism no longer exists only as a social movement. It has become a discipline (Women's/Gender Studies) or sub-discipline in most universities (Webb et al., 2007, p. 238).

Quinn (2005, p. 11) argues that universities are paradoxical spaces for women and the women's movement. Higher education institutions have been 'bastions of hegemonic patriarchal practices', and sites for the epistemic exclusion of women (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 391) but simultaneously these sites provide opportunities for women to resist patriarchy and challenge their subordination. Within the academy, feminist scholars have played an important role in university reform by making visible institutional discrimination and biases in university structures. They have challenged what counts as 'legitimate' knowledge (and who counts as 'legitimate' knowers), and have made the academic political, taking the normative stance that research and teaching should be orientated towards social justice (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 392).

In this capacity, the feminist project at universities can be deconstructive, aimed at dismantling the binary between 'knower' and 'non-knower', and displacing university hegemony over knowledge production. This transformative potential indicates that feminist teaching and research at universities may play a role in orientating twenty-first century higher education institutions towards social and epistemic justice.

This possibility, however, remains largely unrealised. In various cases, it appears that, rather than deconstructing this binary between 'knower' and 'non-knower', academic feminism has reinforced it. Postcolonial feminists have highlighted the ways in which mainstream feminism located in the academy has contributed to women's subordination. In *Under Western Eyes,* Mohanty (1988) draws attention to the production of the 'Third World Woman' as a singular, monolithic subject in Western feminist texts. To depict women's oppression as a universal phenomenon, Western feminists writing in the 1980s constructed this 'Third World Woman', ahistorically defined outside of the social relations of her context, and denied agency (Mohanty, 1988, p. 72).

This reductive and homogenous construction objectifies women in these contexts as powerless victims, unable to speak for themselves (Mohanty, 1988, p. 72). In addition, this construction is built in opposition to a liberated Western woman, who paternalistically 'saves' the Third World Woman, in a similar fashion to how imperialists infantilise the colonial subject (McClintock, 1995, p. 44). This version of feminism sits comfortably in imperialist projects and institutions, failing to live up to its subversive and radical promise.

A truly liberatory feminism requires a more inclusive and intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1991, Collins, 1998), which recognises the interconnected nature of categories like race, gender, class, and nationality, and the interdependent systems of discrimination arising from them. Individual experiences cannot be understood through a master identity such as gender; these structures are not independent variables, as one oppression is constituted by and of the other (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). Drawing on this Black feminist conceptualisation, African postcolonial feminist Tamale (2020, p. 44) argues that there are connections between colonial institutions and gender hierarchies, and both oppressive systems require deconstruction in pursuit of true liberation. Where certain groups remain marginalised, liberation is not complete.

A final critique of the disciplining of feminism is about its disengagement from politics. Feminist academics may be detached or unwilling to engage with audiences outside the university establishment, often for fear that their work, already considered less legitimate than other university subjects, will not be valued by other academics if presented in a way that makes it more widely accessible (Webb et al., 2007, p. 238). Building on this idea, a further critique is that feminism has become overly theoretical and philosophical, creating a gap between the theorists and the individuals and communities they aim to serve (Webb et al., 2007, p. 238). In some ways, feminist academics are pinched at both ends, as, since entering the academy, they have had to contend with the notion that their work is anti-intellectual, and too political for the academic establishment.

Mohanty (2003, p. 523) argues that feminist pedagogy, to live up to its liberatory potential, ‘should not simply expose students to a particularised academic scholarship but that it should also envision the possibility of activism and struggle outside the academy’. In this respect, there is still a way to go, and perhaps it is here that community engagement may provide insights.

The emergence of community engagement at higher education institutions

In comparison to feminist thinking, which emerged as a social movement and was only later incorporated into the academy, community-university engagement, and engaged citizenry therein, emerged from within university structures. Community engagement refers to a range of frameworks at the university-community-society interface. Within universities, community engagement practices generally have three different streams to produce a holistic offering of opportunities; engaged citizenry or volunteering, service learning, and engaged research. These streams indicate a conception of community engagement that is not separate from teaching or research, but an integral part of both these components of higher education. Engaged citizenry as a component of community engagement is the focus of this essay: while usually understood as volunteering by students in communities, engaged citizenry more broadly encapsulates the extra-curricular, mutually beneficial interaction between students and their surrounding communities.

In its ideal form, community engagement, and engaged citizenry therein, builds bridges, nurturing reciprocal relationships between university and community in a way that complicates the binary construction of ‘knower’ and ‘non-knower’ (Webb et al., 2007, p. 238). Community engagement highlights collaboration between higher education institutions and their communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and development in the context of sustainable partnerships.

With respect to transformation imperatives, and the pursuit of epistemic justice, the strength of community engagement appears to be its potential to frame universities as *permeable* institutions, where the walls and boundaries of the academy become porous (Stuart, 2021, p. 126). Community engagement, which emphasises the co-creation of knowledge for and with communities, may disrupt the dichotomy between insiders (students and faculty) and outsiders (the broader community) of the academy (Stuart, 2021, p. 142). Reciprocal practices in knowledge production, embodied by engaged research practices specifically, may bring universities and communities closer together, helping to cultivate a knowledge democracy (Keet & Muthwa, 2021, p. 223). Like academic feminism, community engagement appears to hold transformative potential to subvert and deconstruct the binary between ‘knower’ and ‘non-knower’, orientating the twenty-first century towards social and epistemic justice.

However, this potential also remains unrealised. This failure is reflected in manifestations of community engagement in universities in South Africa and around the world. Often,

staff and students frame community engagement and engaged citizenry specifically as an act of service, assuming a 'patronising flavour of benevolence' (Brink, 2021, p. 2). Engaged citizenry or volunteering frequently becomes synonymous with helping others and focuses on the individual or community rather than the underlying structures that cause social and epistemic injustice (Bickford & Reynolds, 2002, p. 231). The prevalence of outreach, charity-based and deficit models means that volunteering continues to be associated with 'missionary expedition[s]', where volunteers come to the aid of helpless and often nameless victims (Bickford & Reynolds, 2002, p. 232). As is the case in Western feminist constructions, this version of volunteering reinforces 'knower' and 'non-knower' distinctions, sitting comfortably in imperial institutions.

Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p. 392) label this version of engaged citizenry 'reproductive volunteering'. Under this framework, universities promote volunteering as a way for students to become employable, for universities to improve relationships with communities, and for community partners to benefit from improved resource access (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 388). Universities position this version of volunteering as a 'win/win' activity (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 387). Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p. 387) argue that this portrayal hides critical tensions about class privilege, community, and the role of higher education in maintaining unjust systems. Rather than making universities more permeable to their communities, it reinforces the distinction between the individual student and the assumed homogeneous community and fails to acknowledge the power relations between and within these groups.

This uncritical portrayal may mask the fact that engagement does not automatically empower all of those involved (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 391). This approach to building bridges fails to consider why social divides exist in the first place, or how they may be perpetuated by practices of higher education. Perhaps most significantly, this framework implies that students benefit from new skills and enhanced employability prospects rather than from their contribution to social justice that serves them as part of their community (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 386). This framing is reproductive, as volunteer activities do not challenge but instead reproduce and reinforce existing power relations.

Uncritical conceptualisations of the benefits of community engagement may therefore do more harm than good if few students see their service as a contribution to structural change. In addition, feminist scholars are rightly wary of a romanticised community often coupled with charity and service work (Herd & Meyer, 2002). This portrayal has lingering connotations about women's work; outreach by individual volunteers may be seen as doing the socially reproductive labour of universities and shifting the responsibility for the work of engaging with communities away from university leaders. Romanticised depictions of community need to be unpacked and reshaped. We ultimately need to be critical to make visible power relations between communities and universities and disrupt the status quo.

A final obstacle may be resistance on the part of university faculty to the integration of community engagement as a core function of higher education. For many academics and students, it seems that community engagement feels like an 'add on' or 'nice to have'

(Bender, 2008, p. 83), something that takes place if one can find time in the day after the 'joy of research and necessity of teaching' (Brink, 2021, p. 2). Therefore, what often results is a silo model whereby teaching, research and community engagement are falsely separated (embodied by the depiction of community engagement as a third and separate strand of the academic project), and where community engagement is not properly infused in higher education institutions (Bender, 2008, p. 87). Forms of engagement reside on the periphery of our spaces of learning, leaving institutions of higher education unchanged (Bawa, 2021, p. 209). As a result, community engagement does not manifest its potential to challenge the character and orientation of universities.

Towards transformation: connecting the insights of postcolonial feminism and community engagement

The previous paragraphs highlight how academic feminism and community engagement have failed to live up to their liberatory potential in higher education institutions. This does not mean that all is lost. Perhaps, given these shortcomings, connection and collaboration between feminism(s), specifically postcolonial feminism, and community engagement can orientate both projects more meaningfully towards epistemic justice, a more permeable university, and a knowledge democracy.

Another framework for volunteering, and community engagement more generally, envisions a 'deconstructive' rather than 'reproductive' practice (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 393). Rather than positioning volunteers as external to the communities with whom they volunteer, volunteering may emerge from embedded connections with local communities, based on empathy and mutual respect (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 392). This version of engagement allows for volunteering activities to reveal power structures and inequalities and thus potentially create the conditions for their own critique; in this way, one's experience of volunteering is part of one's wider lived experience of injustice (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 393). If universities seek to put into action this deconstructive approach it is not enough to merely send students into communities; leaders and teachers have a duty to turn that practice into a worthwhile learning experience. Engaged citizenry, like all forms of learning, takes place simultaneously within and outside of the classroom, just as knowledge and knowledge creators exist within and beyond universities.

Understanding the social world in which they are engaging requires students to have better knowledge and analytical tools, which universities should seek to provide (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 402). Conversely, volunteering/engaged citizenry and other community engagement forms provide students with knowledge which may expand or challenge academic disciplines, and there should be opportunities for these ideas to become infused within the higher education curriculum, potentially aiding the transformation of universities and individuals (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 402). Thus, rather than promoting volunteering as an automatic 'win-win' activity, Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p. 403) argue that a more critical interpretation of what we can expect volunteering to

achieve, and who benefits, is timely, as more students are encouraged to volunteer. Volunteering/engaged citizenry should not just be promoted solely because of associated feel-good benefits (particularly regarding employability) but because of its potential to provide opportunities for students to step outside of the protective space of the university and facilitate their awareness of social inequalities as well as other forms of knowledge (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2012, p. 403). Student volunteering can either confirm or challenge existing ways of knowing. Ultimately, Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p. 403) argue, this is its 'most significant function'.

Recollecting a possibly deconstructive community engagement approach

My recollection of my student experience at Rhodes University illustrates the power of a shift in framing from reproductive to deconstructive community engagement. Four months into my first year of undergraduate study, in 2016, my university became the site for the RU Reference List protest as women refused to remain silent about sexual violence and rape culture on campus. Five months later, I found myself amid Fees Must Fall, a nationwide student protest emerging due to a systemic lack of access to affordable and quality tertiary education. This student activism highlighted that, for many young people in South Africa, higher education institutions do not symbolise an exciting next step in one's life but instead stand out as unreachable ivory towers. I had only before experienced charity-and deficit-based volunteering approaches, and, with injustice laid bare before me, found I had no tools to combat or verbalise the profound sense of helplessness I felt.

A few years later, I joined the Nine Tenths mentoring programme, a flagship engaged citizenry programme serving to equip learners in selected local schools with the tools they need to pass their final Matric examinations to their full potential, and access tertiary opportunities. Learners or 'mentees' are partnered with Rhodes University student mentors who guide them through nine structured sessions that prepare them for their final school exams.

It seems that this framework could easily fall prey to the shortcomings of reproductive and deficit-based volunteering approaches, if Rhodes University volunteers believe that their work is to 'save' learners in local schools. The programme avoids this pitfall in two ways: firstly, its co-management structure means that it is not solely a Rhodes University initiative, but a joint initiative on the part of the schools, the university, and a local education non-government organisation, GADRA Education (McCann et al., 2021, p. 52). Ownership of the programme, decision-making responsibilities, and associated knowledge creation are thus shared. All management decisions are jointly planned, acted upon, and reflected on between stakeholders (McCann et al., 2021, p. 52).

Secondly, Nine Tenths deliberately veers away from charity-or deficit-based approaches to engagement with communities and is motivated by a clearly articulated social justice framework – as well as recognition of the interconnectedness and mutual dependence of

Rhodes University and the Makhanda community. At his inauguration, Rhodes University vice-chancellor, Professor Sizwe Mabizela, re-positioned Rhodes University, such that 'our university is not just in Grahamstown [now Makhanda] but is also of and for Grahamstown [Makhanda]' (Rhodes University, 2019, p. 3). Several mentees in the programme later enrol as Rhodes University students and become mentors themselves, an excellent example of the ways that universities can move to become more permeable to their communities.

During my time as a Nine Tenths mentor, one of my mentees in the programme showed me the power of reciprocal relationships as a way of building stronger communities and societies. I came to the relationship, perhaps still with a reproductive version of volunteering ingrained, expecting she would need me, but this was never the case. She took ownership of our mentoring sessions, and our time together became a space for sharing resources and learning. Over this period, I learned when to guide and offer advice but also when to step back and let her claim the space. Over time, our discussions moved beyond the challenges associated with one's final year of high school, or resources aiding examination preparation. We talked about community, the role of the university in the town, what it meant to aspire towards an institution deliberately designed to exclude you. We discussed what would need to change, and how this transformation could take place. These conversations, occurring in the backs of school classrooms and filled with the possibility of a more inclusive and just education system, felt distinctly feminist to me.

At this stage, Nine Tenths has had success in mitigating at least the physical barrier between university and community. Nine Tenths programme participants generally deliver at least 80 percent of all final year passes produced by participating schools, which has enabled many more students to successfully apply to and attend Rhodes University – the local entrance rate has increased significantly because of the Nine Tenths programme, among other interventions and strategies by the Makhanda community and university (McCann et al., 2021, p. 54). What is less clear, with respect to epistemic justice, is whether those who come from the Makhanda community feel they belong in the higher education establishment, and feel valued as knowledge creators, at an institution still named after one of the world's most infamous imperialists, where traces of its imperial aims are still marked on the landscape.

From this experience, it seems that postcolonial feminist thinking and community engagement both stand to gain from a mutually beneficial relationship with each other, just as universities gain from the relationship they nurture with their surrounding communities. When feminism is linked to community engagement, we begin to move the disciplinary boundaries of Women's/Gender Studies beyond the classroom, merging feminist theory with social action (Clark-Taylor, 2017). This is a first step in ensuring that feminist theorisation remains linked to social justice activism. Therefore, community engagement may aid feminist pedagogy in its attempt to become closer to, and less detached from, the individuals and groups that comprise feminist and other justice-orientated social movements. In this way, feminism may begin to 'envision the possibility of activism and struggle outside the academy' (Mohanty, 2003, p. 523).

Postcolonial feminist theorising may also move volunteering closer to a transformative form of citizenry, providing a systemic view of social problems and a greater theoretical sense of the importance of this action to obtain social justice, especially in former colonies. This moves both groups closer to achieving a nexus between theory and practice and facilitating the shift away from charity and towards justice-orientated approaches. As such, the intersection of feminism and engaged citizenry holds potential to capacitate students to recognise and challenge inequality and injustice in society, contributing to a more transformative educational experience within and beyond the classroom.

Perhaps a starting point could be for the Rhodes University Community Engagement Division to adopt postcolonial feminism as a theoretical framework, to guide its relationship and work with communities, as a means of advancing students' critical thinking about power. This theoretical approach also has practical implications: it would mean a greater emphasis on student reflection, more theorisation and grounding in social justice, and an outright rejection of deficit- or charity-based approaches that fail to challenge or may even reinforce existing unjust power relations. In some respects, a postcolonial feminist theoretical framework is already aligned with and complements the Rhodes University Community Engagement Division's current approach, which has for several years moved away from charity-based models and towards a social justice orientation (McCann et al., 2021, p. 57).

Though uncommon in the literature, the experiences of others who have adopted a postcolonial feminist framework may offer guidance. In Canada, Darroch and Giles (2014, p. 29) reflect on the ways a postcolonial feminist paradigm may enhance engaged research efforts, particularly participatory approaches in health research. These authors argue that a postcolonial feminist approach enables a stronger cognisance of, and challenge to, dominant power relations in research (Darroch & Giles, 2014, p. 29). A postcolonial feminist paradigm may offer a renewed focus on university decolonisation and ensures examination of power dynamics and marginalisation in research practice (Darroch & Giles, 2014, pp. 29-30).

Another interesting case study is that of the Summer Internship on Feminist Community Engagement (SIFCE) at a university in the northeast United States (Clark-Taylor, 2017, p. 89). Open to all undergraduate students, this internship aimed to equip students to become agents of social change through a combination of engaged citizenry with community partners, interactions with guest speakers, field trips, and reading and reflections on feminist community engagement (Clark-Taylor, 2017, p. 89). Students involved in this programme reflected that the overarching feminist theoretical framework better enabled them to build bridges across inter-group differences, make connections between theory and practice, and gain a deeper understanding of the role that power plays in feminist action (Clark-Taylor, 2017, pp. 96-101). Overall, students' experiences demonstrated a development of deeper awareness of self *and* others, as well as an ability to see one's potential to contribute to social justice (Clark-Taylor, 2017, p. 106).

Overall, there are few case studies of other contexts adopting postcolonial feminism as a theoretical framework, and even fewer focused on engaged citizenry or volunteering. Additionally, as can be seen by the cases highlighted above, most exploration of the connection between community engagement and feminism(s) is in the Global North. From the vantage point of my two universities, these insights seem more useful for the University of Oxford than for Rhodes University. Furthermore, these studies do not adequately unpack the possibility of a distinctly *postcolonial* feminist framework for community engagement, for universities both at the heart (University of Oxford) and peripheries (Rhodes University) of Empire, where the decolonisation imperative is most critical. Further studies on the integration of postcolonial feminism and the various forms of community-university engagement, particularly in former colonies and the Global South more generally, would contribute significantly to our understanding of the value of adopting this theoretical framework.

Final reflections

This essay sought to explore the possibility of collaboration between feminist academics and community engagement at universities, and the ways in which these partnerships may amplify both projects' attempts to further epistemic and social justice. Postcolonial feminism may orientate community efforts towards social justice, maintaining a critical focus on power relations embedded in communities and universities, particularly those initially designed to further imperial projects. Conversely, community engagement efforts ensure that academic feminism does not only exist in a classroom but remains linked to its initial purpose as an emancipatory social movement for all subordinated groups.

At points, I reflected on my own experiences at the University of Oxford and Rhodes University as a means of making sense of some of the concepts explored. These concepts are still in their infancy and will benefit from others adding their own experiences and ideas to this subject. I hope that this engagement continues beyond this essay. The voices of community members and university staff and students are essential in attempts to de-construct and re-imagine higher education institutions. Here, we may begin to re-signify spaces of learning, within and beyond classrooms, not as exclusive spaces, but locations of possibility and resistance.

Notes on Contributor

Claire McCann
DPhil candidate, Department of Education, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
claire.mccann@education.ox.ac.uk
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0839-1483

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THOUGHT PIECE

Community Engagement as Publishable Scholarship

Peter Clayton, Rhodes University, South Africa

Abstract

The structures that evaluate what counts as novel and fundable knowledge have evolved over a long timeline, primarily driven by traditional forms of explorative, descriptive and critical analysis research. Community Based Participatory Research does not always fit evaluation and funding structures as comfortably as these models of research which are more established in the global academy, and requires careful navigation of, and some further fine-tuning to, review and accreditation processes, to stand beside more traditionally accepted scholarly practices in being readily recognised as producing original scholarly knowledge.

Context

Engaged research has a long history. Looking back a few decades, community engaged research was regarded as a niche approach within a fairly narrow group of disciplines, and was mostly viewed in the formalised research space as a living laboratory, in which community engagement best practice principles had little influence on the way that the value of the research was assessed. Broadly speaking, concepts such as mutually beneficial and mutually respectful criteria, and knowledge co-creation, are relatively new concerns to the review and accreditation processes of research.

The change has been quite significant in the last 15 years, with most mainstream universities elevating community engagement to the status of being a third pillar of the academy, alongside teaching and learning as the first, and research as the second. This has naturally had a significant influence on the way community engagement is viewed, and resourced, within universities, with service learning and engaged research becoming more of a culture within the academy, as opposed to a specialist methodology within a specific set of disciplines which are focussed on human behaviour, health, education, and development. We now see frequent mission statements asserting that the purpose of universities is to serve the public good (as opposed to being an institutional benefit only), and community engagement programmes are often cited as evidence of this.

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The formalisation of community engagement has been good for the emergence of a greater range of disciplines involved in community based participatory research, but, given the relatively recent growth of engaged research into the broad academic space, the established practices for evaluating research contribution have lagged behind the evolution of community engagement thinking. Many of our accreditation and compliance processes have been established with little consideration of the needs of community engaged research.

Engaged Research

The approach to engaged research has seen some significant evolution in thinking, from the early days of community participation, through the development of principles around ensuring that projects involving researchers, students and community organisations and individuals are mutually respectful and mutually beneficial, to a place where the knowledge and experience of community members is valued in the planning and design of research projects, and credited in the outcomes as co-authors of knowledge. Formalised processes to capture the engaged relationship as a research collaboration have emerged, and a body of theory around a *Community Based Participatory Research* (CBPR) Model has started to take form[1].

It is both reasonable and necessary that engaged research practitioners wrestle with what it means to work with community partners as collaborators in a scholarly project. This is still a fairly messy space, particularly where the community partner does not have the levels of formal education or research experience generally accepted in academic circles as being necessary for a researcher.

In many cases, community collaborators are not especially interested in the research process from the viewpoint of building scholarly reputation and influence; they are more interested in the social or environmental impact that can be achieved from the work. Nevertheless, where community collaborators have contributed to the rigorous process of designing and implementing an intellectual project, they have earned the right to be regarded as co-authors of the process and the outcomes. It is also possible that the learning that comes from an engaged project encompasses innovations that were never envisaged by the academic researchers, but originated entirely from the collaborating community. Novel engagements with and uses of digital technologies are a prominent example of where social innovations have been discovered serendipitously by researchers[2]. The integrity of academic researchers in such cases should not permit the authorship of such innovations to be downplayed in outcomes, reports and scholarly publications.

There exists a wide range of engaged research approaches, from relatively shallow community participation through to co-creation of knowledge, some of which are less (and some more) challenging to the research process in terms of negotiating review and compliance requirements. This thought piece focuses on CBPR as bringing some of the biggest challenges in navigating established research accreditation and oversight processes.

Research Evaluation Processes

The role of public universities and their engagement with society can be viewed as being entirely about *knowledge*. Universities produce and disseminate knowledge through various forms of research, creative endeavours and scholarship, in order to advance the collective understanding and address challenges of the social and natural worlds. Universities teach in ways which facilitate student learning and critical engagement with knowledge and its production. Universities discharge their societal responsibility through engagement with pressing social and environmental concerns, seeking not only to make interventions, but to create new understandings that will advance society.

The foundation of all scholarly evaluation is peer review. This is the evaluation of scientific, professional, or academic work by others (usually independent of the project, and often anonymous) with an appropriate level of specialist knowledge and understanding in the field. All academics are inducted into this basic evaluation instrument through the review of journal papers, conference or book publications, grant proposals, external examining of theses, evaluating teaching portfolios, employment applications, promotions, awards and prizes, and serving on accreditation panels for evaluating the quality of entire institutions.

In the research space, the purpose of peer review is most often to recognise original knowledge. The South African Higher Education System is partially funded through a block grant that rewards institutions for producing original scholarly knowledge in the form of publications and higher degree theses. A *Research Outputs Policy*[3] outlines the attributes that must be met for a research publication to be "accredited", and thus qualify for financial subsidy. The acid test here is that it must meet a specified standard, and must represent original scholarly content, i.e. new knowledge. A paper describing a community project, no matter how significant the social impact, will not be accredited if it does not represent new knowledge, as determined by peer review.

Over time, formal scholarly review processes have settled on a set of broadly accepted metrics for assessing the worth of research results. A number of proxies for research quality and influence have become commonly used in the global academy. Universities, funding agencies, and rating establishments regularly use bibliometric measures, which are a collection of mechanisms such as *citations* (references other articles), *citation indices* (lists of referencing articles that reference a particular article), the *H-Index* (Hirsh number – a proxy for the relative influence of a scholarly author), and *impact factor* (an indication of the relative importance of a journal in its field). These bibliometric measures are not just numbers, they are numbers derived from peer review. They are intended to make the work of assessors and reviewers simpler and more objective, in the domains where they make sense. But they do not always make sense across all domains.

Publication citations are generally regarded as a good proxy for the strength of the author's scholarly influence across peers within their specialist discipline, but it is not a perfect proxy for all aspects of research value. As an illustrative example of how citations can

be of limited value in representing the social or environmental impact of a piece of research, consider the following. Nobel Prizes are awarded on the basis of the greatest benefit to humankind. A widely known award in the research domain is the 2014 Nobel Prize for Physics, which was awarded to three scientists for the invention of blue light emitting diodes (LEDs). The science behind the LED light bulb revolutionised lighting technology, and these Nobel Laureates are credited with making a major social and ecological contribution, by literally taking a step towards saving the planet through vastly improved energy efficiencies in an everyday household product. The original breakthrough was published as:

> S. Nakamura, T. Mukai, M. Senoh, N. Iwasa, "Thermal annealing effects on p-type Mg-doped GaN films", *Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 31*, 139–142 (1992).

This publication has attracted about 100 citations, many of them after the award of the Nobel Prize. This level of citation might be expected as the paper's content is esoteric, requiring specialist knowledge to understand. By contrast, a scientific publication by Lowry *et al* is often referred to as the most cited paper ever.

> Lowry, OH; Rosebrough, NJ; Farr, AL; Randall, RJ (1951). "Protein measurement with the Folin phenol reagent", *Journal of Biological Chemistry. 193 (1): 265–75*

Also requiring specialist knowledge to read, it describes what became known as the *Lowry Protein Assay*, and has been cited more than 310 000 times. Did Lowry *et al* win a Nobel Prize? They did not.

The mixed acceptance of the H-index is also worth noting. It was proposed by theoretical physicist JE Hirsh at the University of California-San Diego as a mechanism for determining the relative quality of the work of theoretical physicists. It has caught on, and is generally used across the physical sciences, but is often rejected and criticised as inappropriate by researchers in the humanities and social sciences. Some mechanisms that make useful proxies for research value in some situations do not necessarily transfer well to other contexts.

"Research for impact" has recently become an often-repeated phrase in research evaluation contexts, with ongoing engagements seeking new impact metrics appropriate to specific types of research, in order to reduce the reliance on bibliometrics. For engaged research, assessments such as an improved social condition (or environmental condition), skills transfer, and sustainability of an intervention, have emerged from such discussions. While many funding agencies (and some university personal promotion processes) have started to use "impact" as a metric for assessing research quality, there has to date been little consensus across the broader academy on what this means and how to consistently express it as a measurement parameter.

Engaged research is particularly exposed to the need to comply with legislation and policy frameworks, far more so than theoretical or desktop research. The example raised in the challenges listed below is that of complying with ethical approval frameworks.

In South Africa the oversight of research ethics standards and accreditation, for all disciplines, is vested in the National Health Research Ethics Council[4] (NHREC), which falls under the legislation of the National Health Act[5]. This oversight structure has resulted in a bio-medical lens through which all research is viewed in the drafting of ethics review processes and standards, to the detriment of disciplines which are far removed from this model. Depending on the national legislation in the area of jurisdiction of the research work, researchers also need to comply with other codified laws and policies, such as Child Protection Acts, Protection Of Personal Information Acts, Access To Information Acts, and so on.

Common Challenges

This section discusses some of the frequent challenges that engaged research projects face in navigating current scholarly review and accreditation processes.

Ethical Research Approval Processes

The rise of formalised ethical compliance processes across the world has frequently been met with resistance – not because researchers wish to behave unethically, but because the compliance models have often been transferred inappropriately from one context in which they made sense, to another in which they do not entirely work. In South Africa, the bio-medical leaning of the NHREC has created several areas of discomfort and even inadequacy for disciplines with substantially different research models.

One such example is the classical research ethics approval workflow, which requires the researcher to

- have a reasonably mature design of research instruments, and
- identify all risks and establish mitigating controls for them.

All of which is required before being granted ethical approval to proceed with field work. It assumes that everything about the research project is pre-determined. This kind of approach does not leave space for the agency of participants and community co-designers. It assumes and requires that the agenda and process will be set and controlled entirely by the academic researcher.

This particular issue has been addressed at my institution, without flaunting any national compliance directives, by introducing a two-stage process, in which pre-engagement ethical approval may be sought to proceed with the collaborative design phase, after which a more concrete submission is made. It has resolved an impasse, but it increases the administrative overhead.

Ethics and research integrity offices play a critical role in research institutions. Their role is not only the identification and mitigation of research-related risks, but the facilitation of research and the safeguarding of the reputation of researchers and the institution.

To find workable solutions to seemingly uncompromising bureaucratic regulations requires the participation of researchers from the areas affected. In this example, it needs CBPR practitioners to be part of the design and running of institutional ethical processes.

In South Africa, the NHREC has a requirement for accredited human research ethics committees to include formal community membership, which is a healthy nod in this direction.

Producing research outputs that "count"

There is a growing acknowledgement that research impact is important, and that bibliometric figures are not adequate to describe social or environmental impact. However, there is no stable common agreement about what research impact is, or how it should be assessed.

A number of social media based "Alt metrics" have become increasingly popular in the sense of measuring public engagement with research projects. Examples are:

- Number of views
- Number of downloads
- Frequency of mentions/discussions in blogs/posts/tweets
- Number of re-tweets
- Number of likes

All of these are relatively easily measured, but none are likely to replace measures based on peer review.

Other measurement criteria for the effectiveness of engaged research have been suggested, and used primarily at institutional level. Here are some from various university-community engagement programmes (not all of them equally useful):

- Participation (how many students, how many community members, how much time they spend on partnership tasks)
- Impact on community partners (how many community members served, effectiveness in meeting community goals)
- Student learning (academic, social, personal outcomes)
- Social impact (partner estimation of benefit, goals attained, sustainability of interventions, social innovations)

The challenge is that many of the suggested measures latch onto the aspects of a research programme which can be reduced to a number. These are not always helpful in identifying quality.

Much work remains to be done on what constitutes a consistent and reliable measure of research quality and impact in social and environmental spaces. In South Africa this work

would be not only for the purpose of appropriately acknowledging and resourcing engaged research projects, but also for identifying novel forms of knowledge that might emanate from this kind of work. We have seen the well-established DHET accreditation processes expanded in the past six years from text-only scholarly publications, to recognise creative outputs that are of a novel scholarly nature, which include works of art, music, drama, fiction, and various other forms of creative artifact. The next challenge is to find a way to expand this form of accreditation to a third category of engaged research modalities, which recognise novel contributions in social and environmental impact.

For now, the research output category that counts, in terms of accreditation, easier access to resources, and career development, is that which is recognised in the academy as original scholarly knowledge. This means it has been peer reviewed, it represents original knowledge, it is in a format that is archivable, and is citable by other researchers who are able to build upon it.

The meaning of Peer Review in CBPR

Whereas including a community partner as a co-author of a publication is not likely to encounter any institutional or sector resistance, the involvement of community partners in the peer review process of scholarly material is likely to be rejected in our current frameworks, unless they already have the requisite level of formal education or research track record.

For example, it is now generally unthinkable in university spaces for the examiner of a PhD thesis to be anyone other than a specialist in the field who has already earned that level of qualification themselves, and usually has done much more than that in terms of building a research track record that earns them the reputation of an expert peer reviewer. Although, at some point in the early bootstrapping process of doctoral programmes it must have been acceptable for a thesis at this level to be evaluated by people who had not yet themselves earned a doctorate.

Where we are in our current evolution of community engagement, it might not be too important an issue that most members of the community involved in engaged research programmes are not in a position to review scholarly writing. There is already a fairly rich community of established academics who are interested in this kind of research.

But this remains an issue that we need to wrestle with in relation to the assessment of the impact of research. As we find more appropriate metrics for the value of engaged research, it is likely that the degree of legitimacy, for at least some of the more qualitative metrics, will be found lacking if not done together with a community partner.

Timelines to undertake meaningful CBPR

Some of the most useful forms of engaged research seek to work collaboratively across extended periods of time, to understand change and continuity, and determine causality. Many of our most useful social and environmental projects which have led to

real improvements in policy, resourcing, and sustainable quality of life, have required longitudinal studies over decades rather than years. Contrast this with the reality that many university researchers deal with, in terms of:

- student project deadlines,
- rapid assessment expectations,
- consultancy snapshot reviews,
- short research funding cycles, and
- frequent changes in the award criteria of funding agencies.

Despite strong wording in institutional mission statements committing universities to community engagement, there remain bureaucratic processes, funding encumbrances, and a reliance on short-term participants, which get in the way, and sometimes make it seem almost impossible[6].

Making a meaningful impact in engaged research often requires resilience in the face of multiple challenges.

Steering review and compliance processes in a more nuanced direction

Our current formal review and accreditation processes clearly need some nuancing to better reflect the requirements of engaged research. This will not happen spontaneously – it needs the voices of engaged research practitioners in the spaces where these processes can be steered. There is no substitute for being the change you want to see.

- Participate in forums where research policy is discussed in your institution, and beyond when given the opportunity, in research committees, ethical approval panels, and as peers in proposal and publication reviews.
- Start including your preferred engaged research metrics in publications, proposals and reports. This is important even when such metrics are not called for, as it is the way that accepted metrics gain traction. The widely used H-index did not become widely used because universities and funders spontaneously decided that it was a good proxy for scholarly influence. It started to get used more formally for the evaluation of researchers and research proposals only after the researchers themselves started to use it in their proposals, reports and CVs.

This participation-based remedy might not be met with enthusiasm by already overburdened researchers. Some might believe that it is not worth the effort, that the time and energy needed might not justify the small and gradual gains that are the nature of evolution in the global academy. Those who hold such views should take heart at the

very big shifts that have been seen in recent years in scholarly publishing, in the areas of open access and ownership of intellectual property, which illustrate that it is possible for entrenched processes of scholarly assessment to change[7].

Notes on Contributor

Peter Clayton
Emeritus Professor, Rhodes University, South Africa
p.clayton@ru.ac.za

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Critical community engagement and the Latin American *ethos*: contributions to a Global South dialogue[1]

Matías Flores, Cornell University, United States, **Romina Colacci**, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Argentina and **Agustín Cano**, Universidad de la República,Uruguay

Abstract

The advancement of the concept of community engagement as a reference for university-society relations invites us, particularly those of us from the Global South, to reflect on our history and traditions. We understand community engagement as a disputed concept throughout history that can potentially house an ethical-political-pedagogical project that questions traditional university models. Observing its historical development and tensions in Latin America invites us to go beyond particular projects, giving an account of a regional movement that continues to inspire university reform processes connected to projects for transforming society. This article presents the history that constitutes the *Latin American community engagement ethos*, its prevalence in critical community engagement, and some experiences that illustrate a living paradigm still under construction that responds to the continent's needs. It concludes with an invitation to review the critical traditions of community engagement and promote the dialogue of experiences in the Global South.

Keywords: *community engagement, Latin American universities, critical community engagement, university extension*

Introduction

At a time when community engagement is positioning itself as a concept that encompasses different interaction practices between universities and society and when some countries export accreditation systems tending to standardisation, there is a risk of forgetting the diversity of trajectories, expressions, and meanings at a global level. This risk is significant for those of us who come from the Global South and have a different historical and social

1 This article draws on and expands a paper presented at the Community Engagement Learning Symposium 2023 and the post on the Community-Based Global Learning Collaborative Blog entitled: Milestones and contributions of Latin American community engagement: Unresolved debates to build a Global South dialogue.

memory to those who today, because of the challenges of the so-called "knowledge society" and the questioning of techno-scientific knowledge, are returning to strengthen the relationship between university and society.

This connection between universities and society is not new for Latin American universities. Since the wars of independence in the 19th century, Latin American nations promoted the creation of universities that would break with the legacy of the Europeanizing colonial university and respond to the needs of the new national and modernizing projects. Ordorika (2013) has characterised this as the "state-building university," which:

> embodies the creationist myth of national projects in the intellectual, social and political spheres, the legacy and promise of the eagerness to school the population and national advancement [...] concretises the national saga that symbolises national pride, opportunities and development through higher education [...] [and] nurtures the intellectual and personal aspirations of the nation and its inhabitants, its social movements, revolutions, and restorations (Ordorika, 2013, p. 110).[2]

These universities developed as contradictory institutions, in which democratizing movements and Latin American critical thinking coexisted with the hegemonic *professionalist* condition, functional to the needs of the national elites accommodated in their peripheral position in the capitalist world-system.

In this article, we seek to share the community engagement experience in Latin American universities in the 20th century and how this trajectory survives today in the critical community engagement paradigm. These experiences reflect a process of dialogues and encounters between nations and scholars that, identifying themselves as equals, have created a *Latin American community engagement ethos* oriented towards the democratisation of knowledge and social justice, setting guidelines in our universities.

We understand community engagement as a disputed concept throughout history that potentially can house an ethical-political-pedagogical project that questions traditional university models (Colacci & Filippi, 2020; Tommasino & Cano, 2016). In this way, the term community engagement is understood as a "functional equivalent" (Dougnac, 2016; Dougnac Quintana, 2018) to the Spanish concepts of *extensión universitaria, proyección social, vinculación con el medio y tercera misión*[3] (and their similes in Portuguese). Observing its historical development in Latin America, a tradition generally absent in English-language university debates, invites us to go beyond particular experiences and programs, accounting for a regional movement that continues, with its tensions and disputes, to inspire university reform processes connected to societal transformation projects.

The article is structured in three sections. First, we review milestones and articulate movements of community engagement at the continental level that allow us to identify a *Latin American community engagement ethos*. Secondly, the critical Latin American community

2 This and next quotations were translated by the authors from Spanish.
3 Literal translation would be *university extension, social projection, linkage with the context, and third mission.*

engagement paradigm is presented. This paradigm aims to maintain the *ethos* built during the 20th century, and the Universidad de la República's case is reviewed. Thirdly, we describe specific experiences that illustrate a living paradigm still under construction that responds to the continent's needs. We conclude with an invitation to review the critical traditions of community engagement and promote a dialogue of experiences in the Global South, to jointly explore the possibilities of continuing the community engagement movement under new statements according to the current challenges.

Movements and entanglements in Latin American community engagement

In this section, we review three relevant milestones for the constitution of the Latin American community engagement ethos, its limits, and the continuities expressed in recent conferences in the continent. We focus on continental conferences because they represent an incipient global dialogue at a regional level and an effort to build commonality out of the different national trajectories.

The first milestone is the 1918 university reform movement, originated in Cordoba, Argentina, that marked the character of universities in Latin America. The reform movement, led by students desacralised and broke with a clerical, elitist, privileged-access university model, wherein knowledge and education responded only to the demands of particular and sectorial interests. In their *Manifiesto Liminar*, students avoided colonialist models, writing, that they have just broken the last chain (Federación Universitaria de Córdoba, 1918). At the same time, the movement introduced the concept of a democratic, co-governed university, with academic freedom and autonomy while committed to the social problems of the population. This student movement linked up with the workers' and peasants' movements to carry out its program of 'university reform with social reform'. Community engagement then became a form of articulation of actors (Bustelo, 2023). Later, popular universities of great importance such as the Centro Ariel (Centro Ariel, 1930) were born in Peru, Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay.

In 1958, the First Latin American Conference on Community Engagement and Cultural Exchange was organised in Santiago, Chile by the Latin American Universities Union (UDUAL). This meeting, of which there are scant records, sought to build a common definition of community engagement, promoted the exchange of students and professors in the continent, and collaboration with UNESCO, OAS, and other international organisations. The conference defined community engagement as:

> By its NATURE, community engagement is the mission and guiding function of the contemporary University, understood as the exercise of the university vocation. By its CONTENT AND PROCEDURES, community engagement is based on the philosophical, scientific, artistic, and technical studies and activities through which the problems, data, and cultural values in all social groups are diagnosed, explored, and collected from the social, national, and universal contexts. By its PURPOSES, community engagement should propose,

> as fundamental goals, to project, dynamically and in a coordinated manner, culture and to link all people with the University. In addition to these purposes, community engagement should seek to stimulate social development, and raise the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and technical level of the Nation, proposing to the public opinion, impartially and objectively, the fundamental solutions to problems of general interest. Thus understood, the mission of community engagement is to project, in the widest possible way and in all spheres of the Nation, the knowledge, studies, and research of the University, to allow everyone to participate in the university culture, to contribute to social development and to elevate the spiritual, moral, intellectual and technical level of the people (Universidad de Cuenca, 1958, p. 305).

Significantly, this Conference ratified that community engagement is part of the university's mission. Subsequently, it became an important milestone in institutionalizing the community engagement concept at a continental level. Within the framework of this Conference, the Second Round Table of Seasonal Schools [*Escuelas de Temporada*], referents of this community engagement format, were also held. For example, to democratise university knowledge, the Seasonal Schools at Universidad de Chile offered courses to the public during the summer without academic prerequisites. In Chile, these schools were founded by the feminist Amanda Labarca and used mainly by women, students, and professors from all over the Americas (Flores Gonzalez, 2023).

In 1972, in Mexico, the Second Latin American Conference on Cultural Dissemination and Community Engagement was also coordinated by UDUAL. The event sought to distinguish the concepts of community engagement and cultural dissemination and to connect with the challenges of transforming the Latin American sociopolitical and economic context during the Cold War and liberation struggles in the Third World. Influenced by the work of Paulo Freire and the theory of dependency, this Conference synthesised the main components of the critical tradition of Latin American community engagement: the commitment to the subalternised sectors and the conception of engagement as a pedagogical process, articulated with a broader movement that projected an anti-colonial and Latin Americanist horizon. The Second Conference states,

> Community engagement is the interaction between the university and other components of the social body, through which it assumes and fulfills its commitment to participate in the process of creation of culture and liberation and radical transformation of the national community. The fundamental objectives of engagement are: 1- To contribute to creating a critical conscience in all social sectors to favor a true liberating change in society. 2- To contribute to all sectors to reach an integral and dynamic vision of man and the world, in the context of the historical-cultural reality and the social process of emancipation of Latin America. 3-To promote the critical review of the foundations of the university and the awareness of all its strata as an integrator of teaching and research, to carry out a unique and permanent process of cultural creation and social transformation. 4- To contribute to the dissemination and creation of modern scientific and technical concepts essential to achieve effective social transformation, while creating awareness of the dangers of scientific, cultural,

> and technological transfer when it is contrary to national interests and human values. Orientations: Community engagement shall: 1- Remain in solidarity linked to every process in society tending to abolish internal and external domination and the marginalisation and exploitation of the popular sectors of societies. 2- To be stripped of all paternalistic and patronizing character, and at no time be a transmitter of the cultural patterns of the dominant groups. 3- To be planned, dynamic, systematic, interdisciplinary, permanent, mandatory, and coordinated with other social sectors that coincide with its objectives, and not only national but to promote integration in the Latin American sphere (UDUAL, 1972, p. 478-483).

In this context, the technology transfer model of the North American developmentalist trend was criticised, as were the limits of cultural dissemination. In many cases, the institutionalisation of community engagement had crystallised these critiques. For instance, community engagement projects were developed as popular education processes in urban and rural environments, as well as programs that sought to link engagement to the academic teaching processes. Examples of these include the self-governance movement of the School of Architecture of the UNAM in Mexico (Cano Menoni, 2019), and the experience of Barrio Sur de Montevideo in Uruguay.

However, these experiences, long known in Latin America (Tünnermann Bernheim, 1978, 2000), had their own limits. The 1918 movement did not develop a dialogue with the indigenous peoples, made invisible the actions and participation of women, who were already present as students and first graduates, and marginalised some engagement developments. The 1958 concept of community engagement reproduced the idea that the university was the center of knowledge and the people the center of ignorance, where the university collects society's problems, projects its culture, and offers solutions. It also silenced other ideas, like Amanda Labarca's, who understood community engagement as pedagogical work or adult education. The orientations of the 1972 Conference, more aware of some of these limits, were, in general, neutralised by the cycle of military dictatorships and conservative restoration processes that almost all Latin American countries suffered in the 1970s (in some cases even earlier). The repressive phase was followed, in some instances, by a conservative modernisation imposed in an authoritarian manner. On this basis, in the following decades, the hegemony of neoliberal policies promoted a 'university counter-reform' (López Segrera, 2008) with a mercantilist orientation, which increased the privatisation of higher education and tuition fees in many countries of the region, and sought to reorient community engagement policies towards commercialisation of knowledge. These policies and developments damaged the Latin American community engagement ethos, reducing it to the dissemination and transfer of knowledge.

In response to these processes, within the context of the restoration of democratic governments, since 1996 new Latin American and Caribbean Congresses of Community Engagement[4] were organised in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador,

4 Its names have changed over time. In 1996 it was called "Encuentro", in 1998 "Iberoamerican", in 2017 it returns to "Latin American and Caribbean."

Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Monge Hernández et al., 2020). Although they began in a self-organised way among few universities, in the context of the 1999 Congress, the Latin American and Caribbean Union of Community Engagement (ULEU) was created as an association for linkage, cooperation, exchange, and reflection on community engagement in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Valenzuela Tovar, 2018). Its objectives are to contribute to improving higher education's quality through the institutionalisation of community engagement and its integration with teaching and research, and to promote the development and training of human resources in community engagement in higher education. ULEU also seeks to promote the internationalisation of community engagement throughout the region, based on mobility strategies and joint development of programs and projects. These Congresses and the ULEU account for a revitalisation of Latin American community engagement, promoting the publication of academic journals,[5] books (Castro & Tommasino, 2017; ULEU, 2015), the creation of a digital library (Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, n.d.), the promotion of national networks of community engagement, and the Academic Commission of Community Engagement of Association of Universities "Grupo de Montevideo" (AUGM), which also organises its own congresses in the countries of the Southern Cone of the continent (Asociación de Universidades Grupo de Montevideo, n.d.).

Critical community engagement today in Latin America and the Caribbean

As mentioned above, community engagement has taken diverse forms and definitions in the university world and Latin America. This section focuses on the paradigm of Critical Community Engagement as a *praxical corpus* that explicitly seeks to maintain the Latin American community engagement ethos. At the end of the section, we illustrate this paradigm with the trajectory of Universidad de la República.

Tommasino Comesaña and Correa García (2023) explain that the term 'critical community engagement' [*extensión crítica*], was coined by a group of intellectuals and activists in Latin America and the Caribbean, following Paulo Freire's educational theory and a sense of political radicalism. The *critical* alludes to the possibility of sustaining an in-depth look at the problems conceived in their historicity and their politicisation, visualizing the power structure that underlies social reality, and positioning ourselves as subjects in the processes of understanding and transforming that reality-in contrast to the functionalist paradigms of the neutrality of science (Erreguerena, Nieto y Tommasino, 2020; Tommasino & Cano, 2016; Tommasino Comesaña & Correa García, 2023). According to Tommasino Comesaña and Correa García, critical community engagement,

5 For instance, Revista +E de Extensión Universitaria at Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Argentina, and the discontinued ULEU magazine *Identidad y Territorio*.

> Allows us to think about the political-epistemic bases of community engagement [...] to promote a paradigm that postulates community engagement as a substantive mission of the Latin American and Caribbean university, which articulates several perspectives and promotes a critical interpretation of the current capitalist, patriarchal and colonial social order in favor of the strengthening of the dominated sectors as historical subjects and protagonists of social change (Tommasino Comesaña & Correa García, 2023, p. 96).

The final declaration of the 16th Congress of the ULEU, held in 2021 in Costa Rica, highlights the role of critical community engagement as a perspective that allows interpreting the challenges of social change in Latin America in dialogue with subalternised subjects. The declaration commits to these processes of change and promote transformations in public universities so that they are in a better position to collaborate with them (ULEU, 2021). In that Congress, some political and ontological principles were synthesised, such as "care for life," "common good," and "*buen vivir [good living],"* and the horizon of contributing to "the construction of more dignified and solidary societies, in which the processes of oppression and domination disappear, and proposals that combat ecocide, exploitation, patriarchy, racism, colonialism and any other structure of domination are generated and strengthened" (ULEU, 2021, p. 158).

To this end, the ULEU fosters epistemological transformations and coherent methodological criteria. To these scholars, critical community engagement should collaborate with "...the construction and reconstruction of other epistemologies, which facilitates the intercultural production of legitimate knowledge, transforming the conditions of dialogue, while at the same time carving an innovative, systemic and humanistic management" (ULEU, 2021, p. 159). In addition, ULEU emphasises the pedagogical role of community engagement as a space that makes possible an integral education of university students and calls scholars to work on the curricular and pedagogical frameworks that affirm the integration of community engagement with teaching and research.

ULEU's declaration gives a major role to social movements and the subalternised sectors of society. To ULEU, these sectors are subjects with whom to make alliances that produce mutual learning and affirm the organisational strength of social transformations. They conclude: "Thus, the interaction and permanent learning between the university and society must become the central axis of community engagement [*extensión, vinculación y acción social*] for the construction of truthful, critical, and ethical communicative processes, oriented to the transformation of the reality of the region. Community engagement is a bridge of knowledge serving nature and humanity" (ULEU, 2021, p. 159).

There is no pure example of a critical community engagement institution or a clear cut or 'shift' towards a critical community engagement. The critical community engagement paradigm is nurtured by scholars' practices and university programs in different moments in history. ULEU's notion of critical community engagement draws from the non-linear and dialectic experiences of universities. As an example, we review Universidad de la República's case, Uruguay.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, community engagement was promoted by students' and professors' lectures and courses that addressed issues of interest to workers, particularly the Uruguayan Regional Workers Federation (FORU) unions. Beyond mere culture dissemination, the lectures supported the workers' struggles. The Popular University of Uruguay, created by the Federation of University Students of Uruguay (FEUU) in 1930, combined literacy, trades, artistic, cultural, scientific, political economy, and history courses and lectures on workers' legislation, agrarian reform, imperialism, law, and social struggles (Scagliola, 2021). It was co-managed by a board of directors composed of students and workers (Bralich, 2007). The Central Popular University, the largest of its kind in the country, had more than 1300 students (Van Aken, 1990).

In the 1950s, community engagement was institutionalised as one of the essential functions at Universidad de la República, as projects were expanding, professionalizing, and linking to research. In 1957, three pilot engagement programs were launched, one in a rural town in the interior of Uruguay, another in a suburb of Montevideo, and a third in a poor neighborhood near downtown Montevideo. Influenced by the dominant developmentalist paradigm of the decade, these programs sought to contribute to interdisciplinary diagnosis and planning of solutions to social problems in these neighborhoods. They were installed as place-based engagement programs to address their areas of reference's health, educational, productive, and social problems.

Around the same period, through innovative curricula and teaching methods community engagement began to be understood as a suitable form of integral education for university students. In Medicine, community engagement was defined as a form of 'in-community teaching' (Carlevaro, 1972), with a humanistic and integral, holistic, social, and anthropological perspective of health and disease processes. In Fine Arts, community engagement broke the market-based art model, oriented toward the consumption of the privileged classes. Scholars took art to the marginalised neighborhoods, favoring active teaching of the students, who were able to investigate and create new artistic forms and proposals that could interpret those realities and produce experiences and meanings together with the popular subjects. In 1963, the School of Agronomy created an Experimental Station in the north of Uruguay to support a new curriculum that gave greater importance to community engagement as a form of collaboration with small family producers in the country's interior.

In the 20th century's last decade and the beginning of the 21st century, critical community engagement had a moment of renewal at Universidad de la República, fueled by the contribution of social movements at the international level such as the neo-Zapatista movement in Chiapas (Mexico), the Landless Movement (MST) in Brazil, and the feminist movement. The conception of movements as knowledge-producing subjects (Pinheiro, 2015) favored horizontal dialogues between the university and the movements, with joint action-research programs. During this time, Universidad de la República developed a 'second university reform' emphasizing community engagement (Cano & Tommasino, 2017; Cano Menoni & Castro Vilaboa, 2016). In this context, it created integral programs

(linking teaching and engagement), communication programs, and incubator programs for associative and popular economy. In sum, critical community engagement practices can be traced through the history of Universidad de la República.

Pathways, regional collaborations, and critical practices

From a regional point of view, even though countries differ in their trajectories, most Latin American universities count on institutional support for community engagement (Cano Menoni and Flores, 2023). This support ranges from the statutory definitions, secretariats, vice provosts, departments, and budgets that strengthen community engagement. Several countries have national networks that promote the encounter of public universities, such as the *Red Nacional de Extensión Universitaria de Argentina* [National Community Engagement Network of Argentina] (REXUNI), the *Fórum de Pró-Reitores de Extensão das Instituições Públicas de Educação Superior Brasileiras* [Forum of Community Engagement Pro-Rectors of Public Institutions of Higher Education] in Brazil (FORPROEX), and the *Red de Vinculación con el Medio del Consorcio de Universidades Estatales de Chile* [Network of Community Engagement of the Consortium of State Universities of Chile], among others.

Latin American critical community engagement, being a particular expression of the diversity of institutionally recognised practices, has been extremely productive in promoting additional networking spaces between universities and academics from different countries. In the last few years, several specific training spaces on the subject have been promoted including congresses, conferences, undergraduate and graduate courses, specialisation courses, and calls for grants. This section presents two examples of collaboration networks and some specific projects.

Regarding networking, the *Critical Community Engagement Research Group Theories and Practices in Latin America and the Caribbean* of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) and the Training Schools of the ULEU stand out (CLACSO, n.d.). The CLACSO Research Group, led by Erregarena, Gomez Castrilli, Padilla, and Tomassino, brought together 186 researchers from 15 Latin American and Caribbean countries: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Uruguay. This research group established a framework of theoretical, epistemological, political, and methodological agreements for its work, and articulation with social actors and movements. In their founding document, CLASCO scholars identified four guiding principles,

> Critical analysis of the current social order in Latin America and the Caribbean, interrogating the integrating and reproductive role played by education in general and university education in particular. Contribution to the strengthening and emancipation of the dominated sectors as historical subjects and protagonists of social change; strengthening the autonomy of their organisations and democratizing power towards the social base. Agreement with a transformative educational process where there are no stereotyped roles of educator and student (everyone can learn and teach). [It is a] Process that contributes

> to the production of new knowledge and critically links academic knowledge with people's knowledge. Interdisciplinary approach and collaborative work between movement/actors and social organisations, in each and every stage: problem definition, planning, execution, and evaluation (CLACSO, n.d.p.).

One of the main results of the work of this group is the recent publication of a book with selected and commented texts on critical community engagement (Erreguerena, 2023). In it, contributions from thirty-four scholars discuss the connection between community engagement and the Cordoba reform of 1918, the influence of Paulo Freire, Latin American and Caribbean critical thinking, the feminist movement, the anti-colonial perspective and epistemological diversity, the territory, and participatory methodologies.

A second example of network collaboration in critical community engagement has been the ULEU Community Engagement Schools. As a specific formative device, these spaces for dialogue and training have made possible the problematisation of both the integration between teaching and community engagement and the realisation of theoretical and practical experiences with territorial intervention. A host university organises each school and brings together teachers, non-teaching staff, community engagement workers, and students from several universities to carry out training spaces in community engagement and create integral practices in the territory with social organisations. The university community and the social organisations are included in participatory methodologies with a gender perspective.

In recent years, three versions have been organised in Argentina (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, 2017; Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, 2019; Universidad Nacional de San Juan, 2019). In 2017, the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo organised a school focused on rural extension, family agriculture, community health, art, and culture. In 2018, the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (UNMDP) concentrated on training, intervention, and territorial development through the Community Engagement Centers within the university. In 2019, the Universidad Nacional de San Juan school focused on strengthening its university Community Engagement Projects.

Regarding critical community engagement experiences and programs, we highlight two orientations: the territorial perspective, and the articulation between teaching and community engagement. Universities that have developed processes of territorialisation have programs that promote 'situated universities' (Rinesi (2015). These situated universities develop their universal missions as universities, strongly articulated to their specific territories, their context's problems, and populations. The territorial perspective on community engagement also contributes to redefining how knowledge is produced by questioning its underlying power relations (Porto Gonçalves, 2009).

There are several examples of this type of program: in Uruguay the Apex-Cerro Program and the Integral Metropolitan Program (PIM) at Universidad de la República (Pérez & Cano, 2018; Acosta & Bianchi, 2010; Carlevaro, 1998); in Mexico, programs at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, at the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas as well as in the "open classroom" proposal of the Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (Molina

& Ejea, 2019; Rodríguez & Rosen, 2016); in Chile, the work of Universidad de Playa Ancha in Valparaíso (González et al., 2017); and in Argentina, the case of the Community Engagement Centers (CEU) of the UNMDP (Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, n.d.).

Since 2013, the UNMDP has created new mechanisms for the presence of the university in peripheral neighborhoods of the district and nearby cities (Colacci et al., 2022). The CEU aim to generate articulations between the UNMDP and the community, with programs established in mixed co-managed venues with Neighborhood Associations, Promotion Societies, Cooperative Schools, Social Clubs, etc. They have built collective participation framework, and restored social bonds, assuming education as a generator of opportunities and equity. From these spaces, territorial diagnoses of different problems are carried out and articulated with activities, projects, and community engagement programs. Their existence played a fundamental role during the recent COVID 19 pandemic, where CEU scholars intervened jointly with social movements to address pressing problems of the population. The diagnoses carried out jointly with the population has allowed them to invert the origin of the community engagement projects, starting from the problems surveyed in the region. The existence of these centers in remote neighborhoods encourages, through planned actions, the inclusive mission of public universities, stimulating the enrollment of young populations in higher education.

Concerning the experiences that articulate teaching and extension in the perspective of an integral education, we can observe a renewed interest in the last fifteen years in some Latin American countries, especially in universities in Uruguay and Argentina (Cano Menoni & Flores, 2023; Tommasino & Cano, 2016). Rather than just understanding community engagement as means to contribute to society in which the formation of university students was a secondary effect, this perspective develops centers the education of university students.

This implies a reversal of the diffusionist perspective on community engagement. Recreating conceptions that emerged in the 1960s and expressed in part in the Second Conference of 1972, these new orientations have placed the pedagogical foundations of community engagement at the center and have valued the potential for students' active and critical formation. This perspective has been articulated with critical community engagement, giving it a strategic component, since by the *curricularisation* (incorporation in the curriculum), community engagement can transcend its marginal place and have a more solid academic and institutional framework.

This educational orientation of community engagement is heterogeneous. Different conceptions and pedagogical practices, such as popular education, active teaching, pre-professional practices, service learning, project-based learning, and ideas on integral education, have been combined and, at times, have come into tension. In the perspective of critical community engagement, it is this active, interdisciplinary, dialogic formation, which enables, at the same time, a better appropriation of theoretical and technical knowledge at play in real work contexts, as well as a critical understanding of the role of professionals in society and an ethical-methodological sense of the intervention processes. A comprehensive

training experience of this nature is *humanizing*, in the words of Pablo Carlevaro (2009), since, together with the mobilisation of knowledge and skills, it stirs [*conmueve*] sensitivity towards social problems and injustice, and foster processes of awareness from positions of commitment and solidarity.

Some of the formative devices developed along these lines are the Espacios de Formación Integral at Universidad de la República in Uruguay (Red de Extensión, 2019) and the socio-community practices in Argentine public universities (Tommasino, 2022). These open devices allow adaptations to different areas of knowledge and disciplinary profiles, favoring the integration of community engagement into the curriculum in different ways e.g., compulsory, optional, elective, internships, and theses.

Towards new horizons for the future

To state conclusions in such a complex process of our universities would require considering that there is something to crystallise, which would omit the existing vital dynamics open to different possibilities. From our perspective within universities in Latin America, we find meaning in the dispute of these horizons for the future, considered as pedagogical and epistemological pursuits in the present. These disputes recreate the social commitment of our public universities by expanding their spaces for transformative dialogue with society.

A 'critical community engagement' movement has recently been re-emerging in Latin American universities. It has sought to reinvent the legacy of the Latin American community engagement ethos in light of the problems and challenges of the present. While we know that these are open-ended attempts in constant transformation, we can synthesise six common characteristics that guide these efforts, to:

a) Promote a dialogic, participative, and collective construction incorporating people's knowledge into academic knowledge.
b) Ensure that community engagement is a pedagogical proposal for the integral education of university students; that it is binding, situated, pertinent, and committed to social problems, promoting the curricularisation of extension in undergraduate and graduate academic formations.
c) Incorporate feminist epistemologies and the revaluation of experiences as a first step for the construction of scientific knowledge, in dispute with positivist methods of supposed neutrality (Colacci et al., 2021; Filippi Villar & Colacci, 2022).
d) Incorporate counter-narratives as alternatives to hegemonic storytelling; to listen to other forgotten voices, and give place to silenced stories.
e) Value subjective involvement as a power of the intervention and learning processes, seeking a sensitive, humanizing education that incorporates affection in academic education.
f) Promote the territorial perspective together with social movements and organisations conceiving engagement as a space for dialogue and participatory action research between the university and subalternised subjects.

Our challenge is to recover the historical legacy and statements from new ethical-political inscriptions. To this end, we consider community engagement as a participatory ethical/political university decision, a tool for social transformation with a permanent effect as an educational act. Positioned today in the development of this movement, we promote the social commitment based on the democratic and democratizing construction of knowledge in a dialogic way, prioritizing the subalternised sectors due to social, gender, racial, economic, cultural, and environmental inequality.

The history of the Latin American community engagement ethos and the critical community engagement movement leads us to the opening of new questions in a time of uncertainty: What are the existing meanings, practices, and experiences in the Latin American University that can feed an alternative university project? What are the historical and current debts of exclusion, cultural invasion, and academic extractivism of universities concerning their societies? What principles, conceptions, and methodologies do we need for an alternative construction? What relations can we establish between the legacy of the University Reform and critical community engagement, and the need to invent new paths in the present, '*sin calco ni copia*,'[6] as Mariátegui said? How do we reconcile a conception of the University as a right with the transformation of higher education institutions so that they can contain diversities, without reproducing epistemic violence, welcoming knowledge historically forbidden by the academies? Who are the actors to promote a project of this nature? How to articulate in a novel way the community engagement with Latin American research, overcoming old and new forms of colonial domination and counteracting the commodification and extractivist tendencies of cognitive capitalism? How, at the same time, to make an epistemic critique of academic productivism and the ideology of development – equivalent to economic growth and exploitation of nature conceived as a 'resource' of 'buen vivir'?

There is no universal and uniform recipe for expanding the imagination and promoting new structural changes in universities; it is necessary to be sensitive to each context and culture. However, this Latin American history and the crucial questions it raises, spark reflections with a global-level scope. A South-South dialogue that recovers these traditions is needed to give answers to some of these questions while, at the same time, helping reinvent proposals and avoid an unreflective repetition of statements and concepts from the Global North experience. This dialogue is necessary to open paths of dispute to other possible epistemologies, to erode systems and filter the foundations of models presented to us as unique, eternal, and unbreakable.

We need to share and rethink the histories and critical approaches to community engagement in the Global South in order to continue the battle for the democratisation of knowledge and the decolonisation of universities. We need to spur a new research agenda on the origins of community engagement in the Global South, before it was labeled 'community engagement.' We need spaces of encounter where untold stories can be told,

6 Neither imitation nor copy.

and the acknowledgment of our practices can create conditions for a real global dialogue. In this perspective, we can explore and build 'the common' between Latin American and African university traditions, recovering the sensitivity of addressing similar problems, grounded in oppressive logics sustaining worlds of social injustice. Our invitation is to create new bonds and common objectives looking at our diverse and rich history.

A real global dialogue requires acknowledgment of our practices. For Freire (1994), dialogue is an experience of human encounter, which creates a shared space through speaking, listening, and questioning. It is a process of communication through which people understand the world and endow it with shared meanings and senses to transform it (Freire, 1994). A dialogue of this nature between African and Latin American community engagement would provide vibrant lessons to better understand the problems of our societies and universities and share and recreate strategies and objectives of transformation from the perspectives of the Global South.

Notes on Contributors

Lead author

Matías G Flores
PhD Candidate, Department of Global Development, Cornell University,
Ithaca, New York, United States
mf785@cornell.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3820-9681

Co-author

Romina Colacci
Full and Adjunct Professor, School of Psychology, Universidad Nacional
de Mar del Plata, Mar del Plata, Argentina
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8222-2720

Co-author

Agustín Cano
Adjunct Professor, Programa Integral Metropolitano and Education
Institute at School of Humanities and Education Sciences, Universidad de la República,
Montevideo, Uruguay
acano@pim.edu.uy
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6076-5580

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Contemporary narratives on climate-induced migration and community engagement interventions in rural communities: A systematic literature review

Shadreck Muchaku, University of Fort Hare, South Africa **Grey Magaiza**, University of the Free State, South Africa

Abstract

The Global Compact on Migration recognised climate change as a critical factor in migration and displacement and called on the global community to address the issue. However, recent reports suggest that global efforts to address the impacts of climate change on migration have not been able to address climate change-induced migration substantially. Global actions have often resulted in suboptimal outcomes. This study, therefore, sought to explore how local challenges can be leveraged in addressing global issues. A systematic literature review was conducted to analyse the potential of local solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change on migration. Information was obtained from full-text peer-reviewed journals published between 2010 to 2023 from the Scopus database. Atlas ti.23 was used to create codes and themes and then construct flowcharts that effectively demonstrate the importance of addressing issues at the local level when dealing with global challenges. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on how local approaches can mitigate the impact of climate on migration.

Keywords: *Community engagement, climate change, migration, strategies*

Introduction

Climate change is, without a doubt, one of the most pressing global challenges of our time. It poses a significant threat to our environment and ecosystems and has far-reaching consequences for human populations, especially in vulnerable regions (McKinley et al., 2021). To provide context, climate change aggravates the global refugee crisis as people are forced to leave their homes due to environmental degradation or the loss of coastal areas

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to rising sea levels. A critical aspect of climate change that requires our attention and focus is its impact on migration patterns in local communities. As climate change intensifies, it becomes increasingly clear that rural communities are on the front lines of negative impacts (Ferris, 2020; Islam, 2022). Rising sea levels, extreme weather conditions, water scarcity, and desertification are just a few examples of the environmental changes forcing people to migrate from unfavourable climatic regions in pursuit of more favourable areas for refuge (McKinley et al., 2021). These forced displacements give rise to complex and complicated migration patterns within and across borders.

Understanding and addressing the impacts of climate change on migration at the local level is important for several reasons, particularly for rural communities. First, rural communities are most affected by the immediate impacts of climate change (Baldwin & Fornalé, 2017; Campbell, 2014). Host areas, for example, are the hardest hit by the impact of displaced persons. These communities bear the responsibility for providing adequate resources and services to the newcomers and often struggle with social, economic, and political tensions resulting from migration (Birk & Rasmussen, 2014). Therefore, rural communities must be equipped with the necessary tools and resources to effectively manage and adapt to these changes (Kothari, 2014; Islam, 2022). Second, local communities also have valuable knowledge, experiences, and traditional practices that can help build resilience and provide localised solutions to climate-induced migration (Twinomuhangia et al., 2023). Their insights and expertise can provide valuable input to policy and decision-making processes at different levels.

The literature on global solutions promoting sustainable and resilient livelihood options in rural communities has highlighted several challenges that make it difficult to achieve effective outcomes. One key factor is the lack of contextual relevance and understanding, as global solutions often fail to consider the unique socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts of local communities (Pemberton & Furlong, 2021). This results in suboptimal interventions that may not address the specific needs and priorities of the communities, leading to limited success and sustainability of the proposed solutions (Nabong et al., 2023). Additionally, top-down approaches and a lack of meaningful community engagement undermine the sense of ownership and empowerment among community members (Wiederkehr et al., 2018), thereby impeding their abilities to effectively implement and sustain proposed mitigation initiatives (Perch-Nielsen & Bättig, 2008). Thus, involving communities during the research, compilation and implementation of scientific guidelines is essential.

A comprehensive synthesis of the literature illustrates the different benefits of community engagement in addressing climate-induced migration. One of the primary reasons is that communities hold valuable indigenous knowledge about their local environment and climate patterns (Wilkinson et al., 2016). This knowledge, passed down through generations can provide critical insights and understanding of the changes occurring in the ecosystem (Allgood & McNamara, 2017). Recent studies have highlighted why integrating indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge allows for a holistic and comprehensive

understanding of the climate change challenges faced by communities (Birk & Rasmussen, 2014; Kothari, 2014). However, despite the significance of understanding and addressing the impacts of climate change on migration in local communities, there is a notable lack of literature and research in this area (Wilkinson et al., 2016; Baldwin & Fornalé, 2017). Most existing studies and discussions on climate-related migration have tended to focus on global solutions for global challenges (Muchaku et al., 2023), neglecting the specific nuances and dynamics at the local level. This knowledge gap hinders our ability to develop targeted interventions, policies, and initiatives that are tailored to the needs and realities of affected communities. Therefore, this literature review aims to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive and critical analysis of how indigenous knowledge can complement scientific research and provide valuable insights into local adaptation strategies. By doing so, this study can contribute to the development of more context-specific and effective strategies for managing climate-induced migration and supporting impacted communities.

The literature reviewed emphasises the importance of a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing the impacts of climate change on migration (Kothari, 2014; Islam, 2022). This includes implementing measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as developing policies and programmes to manage migration effectively. Given the findings of the study, there is an urgent need to explore how communities can play an active role in mitigating the impacts of climate-induced migration. This leads us naturally to the question of how community members can be involved in the co-creation, adoption, and long-term implementation of policies in addressing climate-induced migration.

Theoretical Framework

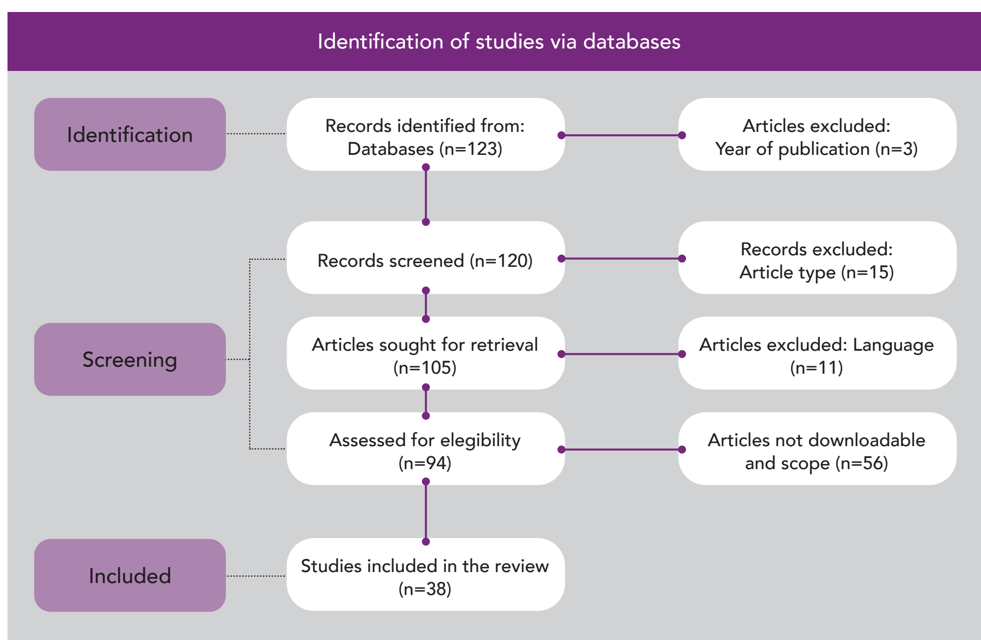
This study employs the theoretical concept of environmental migration and climate change. Environmental migration is defined as "the movement of people who are displaced or forced to move due to environmental factors, including climate change" (United Nations, 2018, p.4). The theoretical framework of this research highlights the interplay between climate change and migration. Considering the theoretical discussions, the findings of this study suggest that climate change has been identified as the main driver of environmental migration, with its effects on weather patterns leading to droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events that can trigger migration. It is important to note that not all people who are displaced due to climate change will become migrants, as some will be able to remain in their communities and adapt to the changing environment. However, individuals who migrate because of climate change may encounter numerous obstacles, such as limited availability of fundamental services and economic opportunities.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study entailed a systematic literature review examining the effects of climate-induced migration on rural communities. A systematic review approach was preferred because of its advantages in collecting, reviewing, and analysing

large literature documents. This methodology was specifically designed to identify peer-reviewed publications that addressed the topic of the study. The identification of these publications was supported by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) method to ensure transparency and reliability (Moher et al., 2009). Figure 1 shows the sequence of steps followed in this screening process. In the steps shown in Figure 1 below, peer-reviewed articles from the Scopus database were considered in this search process.

Figure 1: Flow chart of literature review-based articles excluded and included



A multi-stage screening process was used to ensure that the selected publications were reasonably representative of the prevailing situation. The initial search included a rigorous screening of each publication based on title, abstract and keywords to capture the most relevant articles for this study. A total of 123 articles were found, of which three (3) were excluded based on the year of publication. In the second phase, only peer-reviewed articles were included. This screening excluded fifteen publications that did not meet the exclusion criteria. This screening yielded 105 publications, of which eleven (11) were further excluded, and only articles written in English were considered. This screening yielded 94 peer-reviewed articles. In the final screening phase, all articles were checked for their objective relevance to the scope of the study. In this way, 56 articles were screened out and a final selection of 38 articles was made that could be downloaded and were considered relevant to the scope of the study.

Table 1: The Boolean operator used to retrieve articles

Boolean Operator	Number of Articles
TITLE-ABS-KEY (Community AND "climate change" OR "climate change induced" AND Migration AND "Africa")	123
TITLE-ABS-KEY (community AND "climate change" OR "climate change induced" AND migration AND "Africa") AND PUBYEAR > 2009 AND PUBYEAR < 2024	105
TITLE-ABS-KEY (community AND "climate change" OR "climate change induced" AND migration AND "Africa") AND PUBYEAR > 2009 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND (EXCLUDE (DOCTYPE, "bk") OR EXCLUDE (DOCTYPE, "no")) AND (EXCLUDE (LANGUAGE, "Russian") OR EXCLUDE (LANGUAGE, "French") OR EXCLUDE (LANGUAGE, "Czech"))	94

Table 2: Criteria for inclusion and exclusion
n were employed during the literature search and document selection phase

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Keywords: climate change, migration, community	Does not include keywords
Type of Study: peer-reviewed article, book chapter	Type of Study: book, working paper, report, conference paper
Must be focused on climate change-induced migration	NOT climate change-induced migration-focused
English language publication	Non-English language publication
Date range: post-2010 to present	Date range: pre-2010

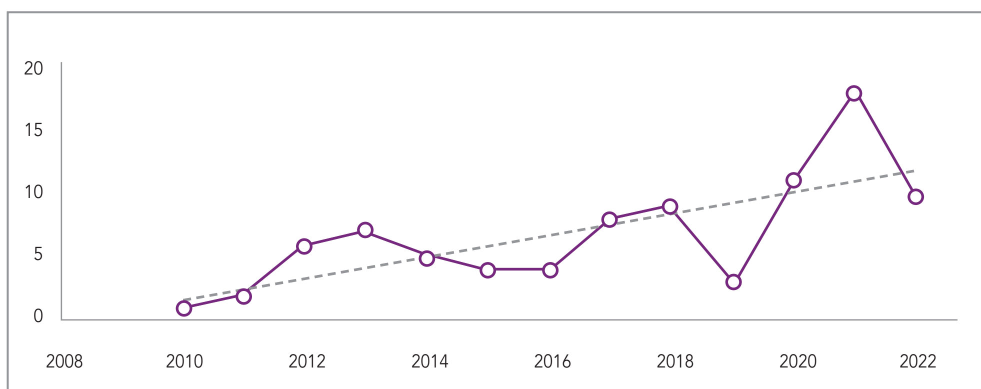
Data Analysis

After the extraction of relevant data, the article files were uploaded into Atlas ti.23 for analysis. By employing Atlas.ti.23, vast amounts of textual data extracted from these reviews were organised, categorised, and analysed. The software electronically generated codes and themes, assisting in identifying patterns, relationships, and insights within the data. It also facilitated the creation of memos and annotations, which helped researchers keep track of their thought processes and interpretations throughout the analysis. In addition, the software facilitated the creation of visual representations, such as network diagrams, that enhanced understanding of the connections between different types of qualitative data.

Results

The data on climate change-induced migration, obtained through a systematic review method, unveils interesting patterns. The number of articles published throughout the years indicates a growing interest and recognition of the issue. In 2010, only two articles were published, suggesting that climate change-induced migration may have been a relatively nascent topic back then. However, the number increased significantly in subsequent years, with six articles in 2013, ten in 2018, eighteen in 2021, and eight in 2022. This exponential growth reflects the intensifying concern and research in the field of climate change and its impact on human migration. It demonstrates a recognition of the urgent need to understand and address the consequences of climate change-induced displacement.

Figure 2: *Trend of peer-reviewed articles found in the Scopus database*



Discussion

The literature findings in this paper on addressing the impacts of climate change on migration in local communities highlight several key findings. First, the research highlights that climate change is an important driver of migration in many parts of the world (Lama, Hamzaand, & Wester, 2021). Secondly, the literature highlights that local communities are often the most affected by the impacts of climate change and subsequent migration (Akinnabge & Irohibe, 2014). These communities, particularly in developing countries, often lack the resources and infrastructure to cope with the influx of migrants. This can lead to tensions and conflicts between refugees and host communities and exacerbate social and economic inequalities.

Challenges of global approaches when addressing context-specific challenges

A review of the literature revealed that global solutions can be integrated with local solutions by considering the specific needs, contexts, and cultures of local communities (Birk & Rasmussen, 2014). Scholars of this view argue that a bottom-up approach engages local stakeholders and ensures their active participation in decision-making processes (Ferris, 2020). An additional supporting argument is that several global-based strategies have often failed in promoting sustainable and resilient livelihood options in certain regions due to a lack of understanding and recognition of local realities (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2015; Baldwin & Fornalé, 2017). As a result, this article asserts that the current strategies struggle to meaningfully contribute towards community development as they are hypothetical and not derived from communities with specific and different characteristics. This highlights the importance of adapting local solutions to global challenges rather than imposing one-size-fits-all approaches.

Mitigation efforts

Rural communities can take several actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change (McMichael et al., 2012). First, they can encourage the adoption of sustainable energy sources, such as solar panels by providing incentives and financial support to residents and businesses (Nishimura, 2015). In addition, promoting energy-efficient practices, such as adopting LED lighting and energy-efficient appliances, can significantly reduce carbon emissions (Kothari, 2014). Local municipalities can also invest in public transportation infrastructure to improve transit access and encourage people to use buses or trains instead of cars (Balsari et al., 2020). When these systems are not available, implementing policies that promote sustainable land use practices, such as protecting forests and creating green spaces, can help absorb carbon dioxide and mitigate climate change. Finally, educating residents about the importance of recycling, waste reduction, and water conservation can also contribute significantly to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Challenges of the current climate adaptation strategies

There is an increasing collection of literature accentuating the significance of rural communities in implementing strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change. One key strategy is to improve infrastructure, such as building stronger and more resilient homes. Studies have shown that retrofitting homes to be more energy efficient and installing measures to protect against extreme weather events can effectively reduce the vulnerability of communities to climate change impacts (Piguet et al., 2011). Another important strategy is the implementation of early warning systems for exceptionally severe or unusual weather phenomena that can cause significant damage and pose a threat to human life and property. The literature suggests that the implementation of effective early warning systems can

substantially reduce the impact of disasters by providing communities with timely and precise information to communities and enabling them to take appropriate measures to minimise potential damage (McMichael et al., 2012). In addition, developing local climate action plans has proven to be an effective strategy for building community resilience. These plans can help communities identify and prioritise adaptation actions tailored to their specific needs, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and coordinate efforts across sectors. However, the literature also points to challenges in implementing these strategies, such as limited financial resources, insufficient institutional capacity, and lack of community awareness. Therefore, it is imperative that forthcoming efforts concerning addressing these challenges to ensure effective and equitable adaptation at the community level.

Build local capacity

According to scholarly research, developing local communities' proficiency in responding to climate change and its effects is essential for enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience (Naser et al., 2019). Providing training and education on climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies is highlighted as an effective approach (Wilkinson et al., 2016). that enables communities to understand local climate change impacts, identify vulnerabilities, and develop appropriate responses (Piguet *et al*., 2011). Supporting local initiatives such as community-based natural resource management and sustainable agricultural practices is also highlighted as enabling communities to take ownership of their adaptation efforts (Mortreux & Barnett, 2009). In addition, promoting community-led resilience-building projects, such as establishing early warning systems or implementing nature-based solutions, can strengthen local adaptive capacity and promote community cohesion (McKinley et al., 2021). However, challenges remain in terms of funding and resource availability, ensuring inclusion and equitable participation, and integrating traditional knowledge and scientific approaches (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2015). Therefore, further research and collaboration between researchers and communities is needed to develop context-specific capacity-building strategies that address the unique challenges and opportunities of individual communities.

Strengthen social protection systems

Evidence from the literature examined supports the argument that rural communities play a critical role in ensuring the implementation of social protection systems that support vulnerable populations affected by climate change-induced migration (Baldwin & Fornalé, 2017). Financial assistance and sustainable practices are considered essential, as they can help displaced persons and impacted communities meet their basic needs and recover from the loss of livelihoods (Upadhyay et al., 2014). Social services, such as counselling and psychosocial support, are crucial to address the psychological impacts of displacement and facilitate their integration into new communities. McMichael et al. (2012) and McKinley et al. (2021) observe that displaced populations have limited access to healthcare making it difficult for them to access preventative care and necessary screenings, resulting in

potential outbreaks within these vulnerable communities. Additionally, education is vital for displaced children and adults, as it enables them to acquire skills and knowledge for future employment and self-reliance (Kothari, 2014). However, the literature also highlights challenges in implementing these social protection systems, such as limited resources and the need for tailored approaches that consider the unique needs of different communities. Moreover, the involvement and participation of the displaced populations themselves in decision-making processes are crucial for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of these systems (McKinley et al., 2021).

Support sustainable livelihoods

The results are often mixed in the literature on promoting sustainable and resilient livelihood options in rural communities (Ferris, 2020). On the one hand, studies have highlighted successful cases where interventions such as capacity building, access to resources, and income diversification have led to improved livelihoods and resilience in rural communities (Kothari, 2014). These initiatives have enhanced agricultural productivity, promoted natural resource management, and empowered vulnerable groups (McMichael et al., 2012). However, the literature also acknowledges the challenges and limitations in implementing sustainable livelihood approaches. Many initiatives have faced difficulties scaling up, creating long-term impacts, and addressing complex socio-economic and environmental dynamics. Additionally, there are concerns that certain interventions may perpetuate inequalities or overlook broader structural issues (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2015). Thus, while the literature presents promising results, there is a need for ongoing research and critical evaluation to identify effective strategies that can truly promote sustainable and resilient livelihood options in rural communities.

Global solutions can be integrated with rural, context-based strategies in promoting sustainable and resilient livelihood options in rural communities through a multi-level approach (Barnett & Webber, 2010). Firstly, global solutions can provide a framework for guiding local strategies by establishing overarching goals and objectives (Uddin et al., 2021). For example, global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can provide a roadmap for addressing various aspects of sustainable livelihoods, such as reducing poverty, promoting gender equality, and combating climate change. Local strategies can then be developed based on the specific needs and conditions of each community (Twinomuhangia et al., 2023), considering their unique resources, challenges, and cultural practices. Employing a localised approach guarantees that solutions are crafted specifically for the context, making them more likely to be accepted and embraced by the local community (Birk & Rasmussen, 2014). Moreover, global solutions can provide technical expertise, financial support, and best practices to assist local communities in implementing their strategies effectively. A more comprehensive and holistic approach to promoting sustainable and resilient livelihoods can be achieved by combining the global perspective with local knowledge and participation.

In addition, global solutions can support local communities by facilitating knowledge exchange and networking opportunities. This can be done through platforms, forums, and partnerships connecting communities and practitioners from around the world (Islam, 2022). By sharing experiences, lessons learned, and innovative ideas, local communities can benefit from global expertise and adapt successful approaches to their specific contexts (Baldwin & Fornalé, 2017). Furthermore, global solutions can also facilitate access to markets and create opportunities for local products and services to reach a wider consumer base (Ferris, 2020). This can help diversify local economies and enhance their resilience by reducing dependence on a single source of income. On the other hand, local solutions can contribute to the global agenda by providing valuable insights and alternative approaches that can inform global policies and strategies (Uddin et al., 2021). Their contextual knowledge and innovative practices can help identify gaps and areas for improvement in global initiatives, ensuring they are relevant and effective on the ground. By integrating global solutions with local strategies, a mutually beneficial relationship can be established, where both levels benefit and contribute to sustainable and resilient livelihoods at the global and local levels.

Study recommendations

Based on the literature review on the impacts of climate-induced migration in rural communities and community engagement, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Strengthen community engagement: recognise the importance of community engagement in addressing climate-related migration issues. Create platforms for meaningful collaboration between policymakers, community leaders, and residents. Encourage active participation and empower communities to shape policies and programmes.
2. Improve information and awareness: Invest in education and awareness campaigns to ensure rural communities have access to accurate and up-to-date information about climate change, its impacts, and available adaptation and migration options. Tailor information to the local context and ensure it is available in multiple languages and formats.
3. Support local decision-making: Community leaders should engage in open and respectful dialogue within their community to promote self-learning. This will help them understand people's concerns, experiences, and hopes, change their mindsets, and encourage them to actively participate in decision-making processes.
4. Strengthen livelihoods and resilience: implement programs to improve rural livelihoods and strengthen community resilience to reduce the need for migration as an adaptation strategy. This may include promoting sustainable agricultural practices, diversification of income sources, and access to credit, insurance, and social safety nets.

Implications of the study on policy and practice

The findings of this study have several implications for policy and practice. First, the findings suggest that local strategies should be developed to address the issue of climate change-induced migration. These strategies should focus on the implementation of adaptation measures such as water harvesting, early warning systems, and disaster risk reduction. In addition, the findings suggest that disaster risk reduction strategies should be used to reduce the impacts of climate change on migration. Finally, the findings suggest that international and regional strategies should be developed to address the issue of climate change-induced migration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has reviewed the current literature on the impacts of climate change on migration and explored local strategies that can be used to address the issue. The systematic literature review results revealed that climate change is increasingly becoming a major driver of migration, with its effects on weather patterns leading to increased displacement. Therefore, the challenges related to climate-induced migration appear to be becoming more frequent and urgent as the impacts of climate change become more apparent. It was also found that local strategies in the implementation of adaptation measures and disaster risk reduction can be used to reduce the impacts of climate change on migration. Given these and other considerations, this study concludes by recommending that we engage local communities in addressing the issue of climate change-induced migration.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Notes on Contributors

Lead author

Shadreck Muchaku
Risk and Vulnerability Science Centre, Alice Campus, University of Fort Hare, Alice, South Africa
SMuchaku@ufh.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1356-1969

Co-author
Grey Magaiza
University of the Free State, Center for Gender and Africa Studies, QwaQwa Campus, Phuthaditjhaba, South Africa
magaizaG@ufs.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4310-3010

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University engagement as local economic development: Estimating the economic impact of a South African university using a Keynesian multiplier approach

Samuel Fongwa, University of the Free state, South Africa, **Stewart Ngandu** and **Bongiwe Mncwango**, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa

Abstract

Universities engage with their communities through a plethora of approaches. One largely neglected form of engagement is the contribution of the university to local economic development. Empirical studies on the economic impact of universities in Africa have been significantly lower compared to the global North. However, this is not because universities in Africa are not contributing to the economic development of their immediate and extended regions. This paper aims to contribute to closing that gap through an empirical study of a newly established South African university within a secondary city characterized by high unemployment, a declining economic sector, but with a growing staff and student body and high university expenditures. The analysis uses a Keynesian-type multiplier impact model, to demonstrate that the university contributes a minimum of R2 billion to the local municipality, which translates to about 19% of the district GDP. This contribution is made through a combination of direct and indirect activities of the university and its constituencies – staff, students, visitors, and local businesses. The paper concludes that intentional engagement policies and practices from the universities coupled with active commitments from local or provincial government and other external stakeholders could ensure the university serves a stronger anchoring and developmental role within the city and region.

Keywords: *Universities, economic impact, Keynesian model, anchor institution framing*

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Introduction

The economic impact of universities has gained significant prominence in academic literature as universities use such studies to justify funding demands and their relevance to society. Beck et al., (1995) define the economic impact of a university as the difference between the existing economic activity in a region given the presence of the institution, and the level of economic activity if the institution had not existed. Using a range of methodologies including student spending, staff spending, visitors spending, university operation cost and other indirect economic activities, scholars have captured the economic contribution and impact of universities in their regions, cities and localities.

While some South African universities have undertaken studies to quantify and qualify the economic impact of universities (such as Bureau for Economic Research [BER], 2018; Dyason et al., 2019), most universities, especially in rural or secondary cities, have not considered such studies. Furthermore, local and provincial governments show limited interest in understanding the role of the university in the local or regional economy in order to adequately establish the economic development contribution of their universities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2022). However, with the difference in institutional capabilities and contextual variations, each university needs to understand how best it can contribute economically to its city and region (Incera et al., 2022; Fongwa, 2018). As argued by Nauffal (2019, p. 345):

> The recognition of a university as an economic asset offers a unique opportunity for the institution to strengthen itself and enhance its ability to contribute to its community in areas that are aligned with its mission and purpose. It also brings attention to the role educational institutions play in building partnerships with industry that stimulate innovation and help ensure various sectors' continued vitality and relevance.

This paper is conceptually situated within the place-making discourse of universities and higher education institutions (Bank et al., 2018; Fongwa, 2023). The contribution of universities to the development of their immediate and extension regions has been adequately documented in the global literature (Agasiti & Bertoletti, 2020; Amendola et al., 2020; Valero & Van Reenen, 2019). In 2016, the Russell Group of United Kingdom (UK) universities is estimated to make an economic impact of more than £27.2 billion, of which £21.3 billion was outside London.

Within the South African context, the contribution of universities to local economic development has not received as much attention. This study, therefore, attempts to highlight the economic impact of a South African university. The study uses the case of the Sol Plaatje University, a new university in an economically declining secondary city, to show how the university is contributing to the economy of its city and region and could play a stronger role if this was adequately valued and supported by the different stakeholders especially in rural settings (Fongwa et al., 2022).

The paper is divided into five main sections. The next section provides a brief literature review of the role of universities in cities using the anchor institution framing. After that is a brief explanation of the methodology and the context of the study. The third section presents the analysis of the empirical data. The fourth section operationalizes the model to show the economic impact of the university on the economy through a multiplier approach. The last section presents a few implications and conclusion.

University Community Engagement as Local Economic Development: Evidence from Economic Impact Studies

Engaged universities, or universities that see themselves as part of their wider community, city and region not only in policy rhetoric but in their daily activities, contribute to the economic development of their communities. Whether as anchor institutions or as entrepreneurial universities, the obvious ways in which universities contribute to economic development is as a local employer, and purchaser of goods and services and the subsequent indirect and multiplier effects from such engagements. Unfortunately, economic impact studies as a form of university engagement have not received adequate attention especially in developing country context where data collection remains a challenge (Bolaz et al., 2015; Warden 2014).

Beck et al. (1995, p. 246) define economic impact as "the difference between existing economic activity in a region or city given the presence of the institution (university) and the level that would have been present if the institution did not exist". The economic impact of universities in cities or regions assumes the level of economic growth or activity which would not have existed if the university was not present. Three aspects are presented in this short review. First, the historical context behind university economic impact studies and what has informed and influenced the increase in economic impact studies. Second, the dominant methodologies and approaches in conducting impact studies and third, the case for the current methodology for estimating the economic impact of Sol Plaatje University based on the context.

Many reasons have been proposed for university impact studies. Counterfactual or export versus import substitution analysis has been used to justify the economic contribution to a specific geographical area (Siegfried et al., 2007). Other studies have compared universities' contribution to rural areas compared to metropolitan areas within the local economic development discourse and position universities as growth poles (Fongwa, 2013). Still other studies have attempted to show the dollar return of government spending in higher education using such studies to justify an increase in university funding from the public tax base (Dyason et al., 2019).

An obvious contribution of universities who engage with their immediate communities has been through the economic transformation of their cities and regions (Brown & Heaney, 1997). Looking through the microeconomic foundation of endogenous economic theory (Lucas, 1988), universities contribute significantly to their local economies through

a range of facets. This contribution is observed through activities such as the generation of and attraction to new business ventures, direct and indirect creation of jobs for locals, visits from regional and international visitors, providing jobs for locals, procurement of local goods and services and even supporting the social and cultural development of their communities (Wangenge-Ouma & Fongwa, 2012).

Caffrey & Isaacs (1971) had early on identified the core elements in determining the economic impact of universities in their immediate cities and regions along three steps. First, they calculate the direct spending; second, they estimate the indirect and induced effects with a multiplier; and finally, they sum the direct and indirect effects. This final number represents the estimated economic impact of the university. These included employment by the university, university expenditures on procurement of goods and services, income and expenditures of staff, students and visitors, and economic activities of businesses (Kotosz et al., 2015).

Given the complexity of determining the economic impact of the university on society and the economy through an evidence-based approach, a range of methodologies and approaches have been adopted (Drucker & Goldstein, 2007; Guerrero & Urbano, 2014; Roessner et al., 2013). Starting mainly from the 1980s, the rates of return studies within the labour force were a dominant methodology to show the economic impact of universities through the graduates produced based on input and output indicators (Elliott et al., 1988). The 1990s were largely characterised by the economic impact of research activities with the strong evolution of the entrepreneurial university discourse (Goldstein, 1990; Jaffe, 1989). Within the economic impact studies, about two or three methodologies have been adopted. The Input-Output (I-O) model and the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) have been the dominantly used approaches. While the I-O model is more linear in approach, illustrating the demand and supply relationship within the economy supported by the university (Allgurn, 2010), the SAM focuses more on the flow of income, representing transactions across a range of stakeholders and its financial impact on the local economy (Dyason et al., 2019). Within these methodologies, several assumptions are usually made in determining the gross and or net impacts of the university on economic development.

An overview of the context: Kimberley and Sol Plaatje University

Kimberley is the capital city of the Frances Baard Municipality, situated in the Northern Cape Province[1] of South Africa. Kimberley was well known from the late 1800s to the early 1900s for its large deposits of quality diamonds, which made it known as the Diamond City. With the demise of industrial mining, especially within the Big Hole around 1914, the city experienced a gradual socio-economic decline with growing unemployment and poverty levels. In 2020, the unemployment rate was at 28.7%, slightly lower than the national

1 Northen Cape is the smallest of South Africa's nine provinces, with a population of 1.293 million, which constituted 2% of the country's population in 2020.

average of 32.5% (Northern Cape Provincial Government [NCPG], 2021). The third quarter of 2020 shows that the provincial unemployment rate increased by 5.6 percentage points, with the number of employed people increasing by 21,000 and the unemployed increasing by 38,000 (NCPG, 2021).

While agriculture and mining remain the main economic activities, they have both been experiencing decline in the recent past. For 2019, only 9.2% of the population aged 20 years and above had a post-secondary qualification, with about 30% completing the National School Certificate. While 55% of the Northern Cape population lives in poverty, Frances Baard Municipality has the highest number of people living in poverty (62.3%) (Ibid).

The establishment of Sol Plaatje University (SPU) as a new university in 2013 has been perceived by most as an opportunity for economic rejuvenation of the declining economy. Mataga et al. (2022, p. 180) argue that "the expectation that the university would change the economic, social and cultural dynamics of the city of Kimberley and the Northern Cape province was always evident, even at the planning stages of the new university". As stated in its mission strategic plan, "SPU is envisaged as an intellectual space to produce ideas and knowledge that facilitate and enrich participation in and democratic transformation of political, social, cultural, and economic life" (SPU, 2015, p. 11). Seven years after its first student intake, SPU has become a major player within the city through the growing number of staff, students, and businesses able to contribute to the economy even beyond the intellectual project significantly.

Economic Impact Methodologies

Studies aimed at estimating the economic impact of the universities have adopted a range of methodologies. One of the most applied methodologies is the demand and supply side analysis of the economic contribution of the university. As argued by Blackwell et al. (2002), the demand side impact includes expenditures linked to the presence of the university in a region. These include spending from local sources, staff, students, visitors. According to Siegfried et al. (2007) a counterfactual analysis describes how better-off a region will be economically and otherwise, such as higher employment opportunities, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) revenue and overall perception of the area while eliminating the risk of double counting such benefits using a multiplier method. Fongwa & Wangenge-Ouma (2015) show how such an analysis can be conducted in an area of less data availability. While supply side impact relates to the economic impact of the university based on human capital produced and retained in the area, knowledge is produced and applied in the local industry through technology transfer.

For this study, taking into account the context of the university and the region, the focus was on the demand side impacts. Data was collected largely through three set of surveys. One for the firms or businesses in the city, one for the academic and non-academic staff and another for the students. While the aim of the student and staff survey was to gauge expenditures in the region and that of their visitors, the firm or business survey

was to gauge the contribution of the university to the economic activities as observed or self-reported by the businesses. In a previous study, Ohme (2004) used a survey of local businesses situated within a five-mile radius of the University of Delaware's campus to investigate these benefits. Kelly & McNicoll (2011) used a similar approach to determine the impact of University of Kent within the South-East region of the UK using university expenditures including staff cost. PricewaterhouseCoopers ([PwC], 2009) used a similar multiplier model to estimate the additional economic impact of out-of-town students on the local economy surrounding the University of Manitoba. In estimating the economic impact of universities, Kotosz et al. (2015) recommend multiplier and primary data-based models to estimate short-run gross primary and induced impacts at the local and regional levels.

Study design and approach

This study, therefore, adopts the Keynesian-type approach, which includes multipliers such as inputs from business growth and development, university expenditure, and staff and student expenditure with a multiplier range of 1.4 to 2.39. The new university has attracted a number of out-of-town students and staff and continues to attract a range of academic and non-academic visitors into the city and region. The economic activity of these staff, students and visitors stimulates business activities, creates jobs and through other multiplier effects contributes to economy of the region which had been in decline due to the closing of several mines.

Three components define the total economic impact of a university in a region or city. These are direct spending by the university, university staff spending and student spending. Of the three types of economic impact, the first, *direct*, only captures the first round of direct spending to get the total economic impact which factors in successive rounds of spending, that is, the *indirect* and *induced* impacts we need to calculate the multiplier for the local economy. This is given by ɱ the basic *Keynesian economic multiplier* for Kimberley, based on the businesses in the sample. The basic form of an economic multiplier is the inverse of total leakages minus one, that is;

$$ɱ = \frac{1}{1-m} = \frac{1}{leakage} \qquad \textit{Equation 1}$$

With an average leakage of 44%, we get a value of the basic Keynesian multiplier of ɱ = 2.27. In Table 1, we contrast this multiplier with that from other studies conducted on relatively small regions within South Africa. The value of 2.27 is externally validated by the cited empirical literature and is fairly close to the average of 2.54.

Table 1: Multipliers from other studies in South Africa, Source: Botha et al. (2012); Ngandu et al. (2014)

Author/s	Location	Multiplier
Kruger et al. (2010)	Oudtshoorn, Western Cape	3.00
Saayman and Rossouw (2011)	Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	2.77
Botha et al. (2012)	Volksblad, Bloemfontein, Free State	2.90
Ngandu et al. (2014)	Ba-Phalaborwa, Limpopo	1.49
Average		***2.54***

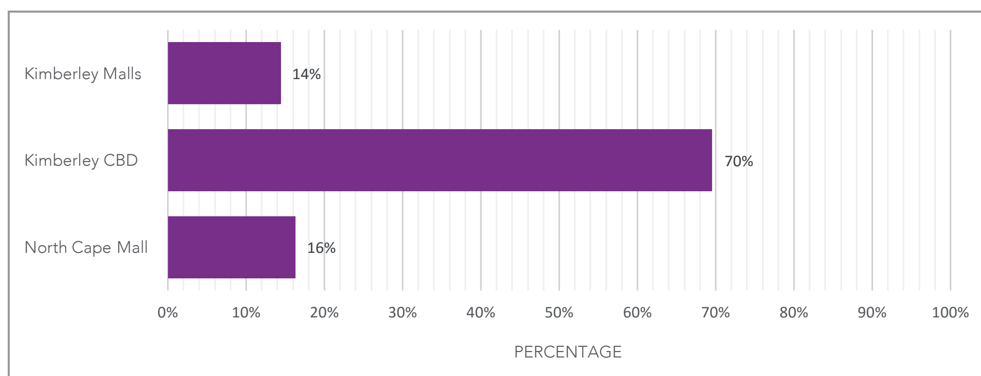
The use of the basic *Keynesian economic multiplier* allows us to capture both the *indirect and induced economic effects*. Based on the expenditure pattern of the sampled university population, which measures direct impact, the effects of successive rounds of spending will be captured by the traditional Keynesian multiplier (Janeczko et al., 2002). While it would have been ideal to use either input-output tables or a SAM multiplier model, this approach represents a relatively efficient and parsimonious method of assessing economic impact in small local economies (Saayman & Saayman, 2004; Van der Merwe, 2008). It should be noted that, the use of the Keynesian multiplier approach has been widely used for similar studies. In Hungary, Kotosz (2014) argues that in the absence of widespread secondary background datasets, a mixture of local or national datasets instead of questionnaires (Garrido-Yserte & Gallo-Rivera 2010) may be used. Kotosz et al. (2015) argue that the Keynesian multiplier model with adequate estimated flows may achieve accurate results on short-term impacts: direct, indirect and most induced impacts. They caution that the main shortcoming of the model is "the impossibility of estimating a significant part of the catalytic impact [of the university] such as externalities, worker productivity changes and local welfare of R&D activities" (Kotosz, et al., 2015, p.13).

Sample size of respondents

Three set of survey instruments were developed for the study. These were informed by the literature, and using instruments used in previous studies (such as BER, 2018). A firm questionnaire was developed to fully capture the university's economic influence in stimulating local businesses and gauge the extent of leakage from the local economy. A student and staff questionnaire was developed to capture their respective expenditures in the city as well as the number of visitors they receive on an average basis. These instruments along with other research related documents went through the ethics committee of the Human Sciences Research Council which approved the study. The study also received approval from the senior management of Sol Plaatje University. The data was analysed using SPSS and presented in the form of descriptive tables.

Figure 1, below shows that 105 businesses were surveyed. Purposive sampling was used, targeting three locations that would give a reasonably representative sample of businesses. Of the 105 firms, the majority, 70%, were in the Central Business District (CBD), while the remaining were proportionally situated in the North Cape Mall (16%) and other Kimberley Malls (14%).

Figure 1: Location of firms in the SPU survey (n = 105). Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022



Based on the responses of these businesses, we were able to determine the magnitude of the leakage from Kimberley's local economy by determining what percentage of inputs they procure from outside sources. Since the supply and demand for products and services should be equal, the business survey would indicate how much the university influences the volume of business in the local economy. The leakage of stock purchases from local businesses represents a flow that does not stay in the local economy. By failing to account for this, we might overestimate the stimulating effect of the additional customers the university's presence has generated.

Business surveys are an established methodology for understanding the economic conditions of regions. This tool is often used to understand general economic performance and sectoral trends (Cox & Binder, 1995; Snijkers et al., 2013). One variant of the latter is the popular business confidence survey, which has been used for a long time to predict the direction in which the economy is moving. In these surveys, confidence is generally considered a headline indicator of possible changes in the economy's direction. An increase in confidence is seen as positive, while a decrease indicates a potential downturn. We therefore expect businesses in Kimberley to be able to make similar assessments with respect to the changes that they might have experienced since 2014 (Willimack & Snijkers, 2013).

Staff and student survey

A survey was conducted among the 585 staff at the university to estimate monthly expenditures in the local economy. Table 2 shows the profile of the staff respondents who participated in the survey. It shows a 34% response rate of the total staff.

Table 2: *Sample Staff profile. Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022*

Staff	No.	%
Senior management	5	2%
Academic	74	36%
Administrative	38	19%
Support	80	39%
Other	6	3%
Total	203	100%

The staff survey asked questions about different expenditure items, including remittances and investment earnings from outside of Kimberley, medical aid visits and the number of visitors received. Since the survey asked questions about net income, medical costs represent expenses deducted from employee income that is only spent in the local economy when staff access health services there.

The student survey had a total response of 282 students. Considering the 1829 returning students (SPU, 2021 Annual Report), mainly second and third-year students as well as Honours (Fourth year) students were sampled as they are expected to have a better understanding of their monthly expenses compared to first-year students. The 282 responses gave a 15% response rate placing it between the 5%-30% acceptable rate for online surveys.

Table 3: *Sampled student profile by place of origin*

Place of origin of students	Sample	%
Kimberley	44	16%
Northern Cape	79	28%
Outside Northern Cape	159	56%
Total	282	100%

The student survey focused on students' expenses in the city and province including the number of visitors and their expenses.

Results from the Data Analysis

The survey data allowed for classifying businesses into two categories: those that existed prior to the establishment of the university and those that came to Kimberley following its founding in 2014. Each category provides unique insights. On the one hand, pre-existing businesses that were already operating in the area can provide an understanding of the changes in the level of business due to the establishment of the university. On the other hand, firms that moved to Kimberley after 2014 can shed valuable insight into how the university contributed to their decision to move to Kimberley.

Profile of businesses

From the survey data Table 4, it is evident that most of the businesses surveyed were established before 2014, accounting for 78% of the total. The remaining 24% of the companies were established after 2014. It is worth noting that most of the sample is in retail clothing and the food and restaurant industry.

Table 4: Type of business by year of establishment in Kimberley (n = 105). Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022

Type of business	%	Before 2014	%	After 2014	%	Total
Construction/Hardware/ Building	1%	1	4%	1	2%	2
Convenience Stores	8%	6	11%	3	9%	9
Curio/Book/ Gift Shop	4%	3	7%	2	5%	5
Furniture Stores/Home Decor	5%	4	11%	3	7%	7
Hotels/Motels/B&B/ Lodges	6%	5	0%	0	5%	5
Household Appliances/Computers/ Cellphone	8%	6	4%	1	7%	7
Liquor Outlets	6%	5	7%	2	7%	7
Motor Vehicle/Supplies/Repairs/ Service	3%	2	7%	2	4%	4
Nightclubs/Bars/Entertainment	1%	1	11%	3	4%	4
Petrol Station	4%	3	4%	1	4%	4
Pharmacy/Surgery	6%	5	4%	1	6%	6
Retail Clothing/Shoes	14%	11	0%	0	10%	11
Supermarket/Grocery Store/Fresh Produce	3%	2	15%	4	6%	6

Type of business	%	Before 2014	%	After 2014	%	Total
Takeaways/Restaurants/Food Outlets	14%	11	4%	1	11%	12
Wholesale	5%	4	0%	0	4%	4
Other/Banks/Perfume Outlets/Dry Cleaner/Coffee Shop	12%	9	11%	3	11%	12
Total	**100%**	**78**	**100%**	**27**	**100%**	**105**
Sample distribution		**74%**		**26%**		

Observed growth in business since the establishment of SPU

As previously mentioned, businesses regularly produce performance data, which can be utilized to monitor growth and progress over time. The survey also explores the extent to which such growth has been achieved since the establishment of SPU. Among those who conducted business in Kimberley, 44% recognized the potential for growth impact, while 25% were confident that their business had experienced growth (refer to Table 5). This percentage was even greater for those who established their business after 2014, at 42%.

Table 5: Would you say your business has observed growth since the establishment of SPU? Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022

Growth in business	%	Before 2014	%	After 2014	%	Total
Certainly	25%	19	42%	11	29%	30
Possibly	44%	34	31%	8	41%	42
Not sure	27%	21	19%	5	25%	26
Not at all	4%	3	8%	2	5%	5
Total	**100%**	**77**	**100%**	**26**	**100%**	**103**

As will be discussed in the section on the multiplier effects of SPU, the growth in business generates both indirect and induced impacts that continue to make a positive contribution to Kimberley's economy.

Spending patterns

Respondents were also asked to assess whether there were in differences in spending patterns between university customers relative to other customers. Table 6, shows that about 50% of businesses felt that university customers spent 10 to 20% more than other

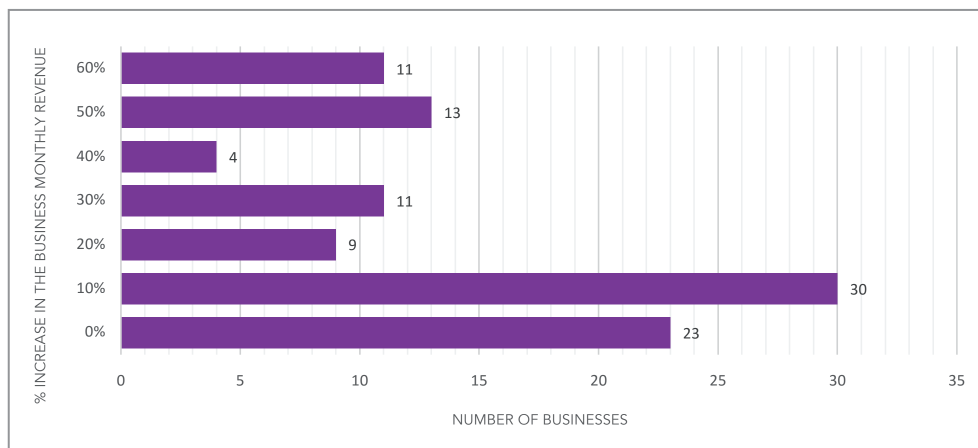
customers. For those businesses established after 2014, the ones that were more likely to have been located in Kimberley because of SPU, these had more of them reporting that they spent 21 to 50% more than 22% relative to 15% of the before 2014 group.

Table 6: Which statement would you say best describes the spending patterns of your main customers? Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022

Relative to other customers, university customers spend…	%	Before 2014	%	After 2014	%	Total
More than 50%	4%	3	11%	3	6%	6
21 to 50%	15%	12	22%	6	17%	18
10 to 20%	51%	40	48%	13	50%	53
Spend the same	10%	8	4%	1	9%	9
Not sure	19%	15	15%	4	18%	19
Total	100%	78	100%	27	100%	105

Businesses could distinguish between customer types based on their sales patterns during vacations and when the university is in session. Figure 2 depicts the number of firms that connect university activities with a corresponding percentage increase in revenue.

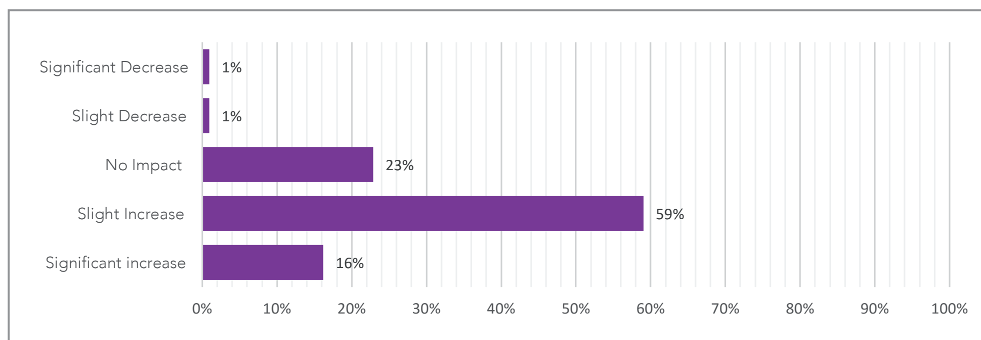
Figure 2: University activities lead to a __ % increase in the monthly business revenue (n = 101) Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022



Impact of SPU on business monthly revenue

Thirty-nine percent of firms reported increases in revenue, between 10% and 20%, and this was supported by findings that show that 59% saw a marginal increase in their monthly revenue, with 16% saying the impact of SPU (staff and students) led to significant increases, see Figure 3.

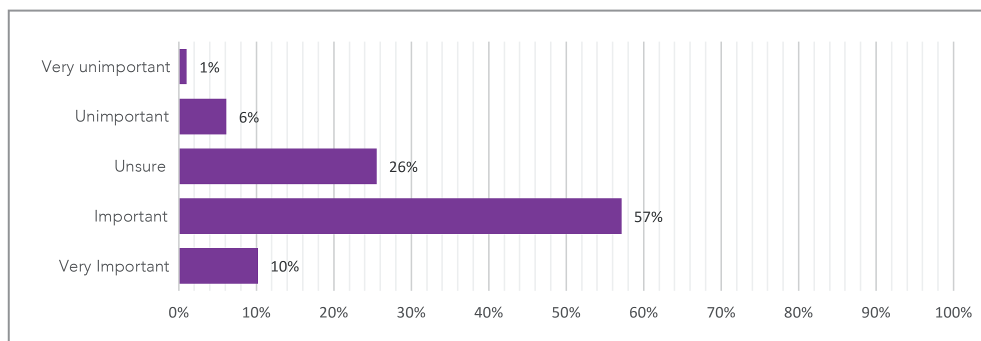
Figure 3: What Impact does SPU (staff/student) have on your monthly revenue? (n = 105). Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022



Importance of SPU to business growth and development

Considering that revenue cannot increase without growth, the importance of SPU to these businesses' growth and development affirms the previous findings. Figure 4, shows that 67% reported that SPU was 'important' to 'very important' for growth and development, with only 7% indicating that it was either 'unimportant' or 'very unimportant'. In addition to increasing revenue, the significance of this finding is that growth and business development are essential ingredients for long-term business sustainability and raising the level of economic activity in Kimberley.

Figure 4: How important is the university to your business growth and development? (n = 98). Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022



Employment impacts

In a country like South Africa, with a high unemployment rate, understanding the employment stimulus of any form of socioeconomic activity is important. Table 7 below shows that, on average, 32% of businesses surveyed routinely employ additional workers as a result of the university. Precisely and understandably, the majority of these, 52%, are the post-2014 entrants who reported using additional workers relative to 26% of those businesses that had already been operating in Kimberley.

Table 7: Additional workers as a result of the university? Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022; p-value 0.012

Additional workers	%	Before 2014	%	After 2014	%	Total
Yes	26%	20	52%	14	32%	34
No	74%	58	48%	13	68%	71
Total	**100%**	**78**	**100%**	**27**	**100%**	**105**

The reported p-value of 0.012 shows that the observed association, with respect to pattern and magnitude, between employing additional workers and the year of establishment is statistically significant. This finding is crucial as it highlights the significant contribution of businesses attracted to Kimberley by the presence of the university in terms of creating employment opportunities and supporting livelihoods in the local economy.

To further understand the nature of these employment impacts Table 8 shows that 1-10 additional workers had been employed by the 33 businesses that indicated employing additional staff as a result of the university. More encouraging is that 39% of the same businesses indicated that the jobs were permanent, thus contributing to sustainable sources of household income (see Table 9).

Table 8: Job opportunities due to university

Number	%	Total
None	67%	70
1-10	32%	33
11-20	1%	1
Total	**100%**	**104**

Table 9: Nature of contracts of jobs (n = 33)

Type of contract	%	Total
Temporary	61%	19
Permanent	39%	13
Total	**100%**	**33**

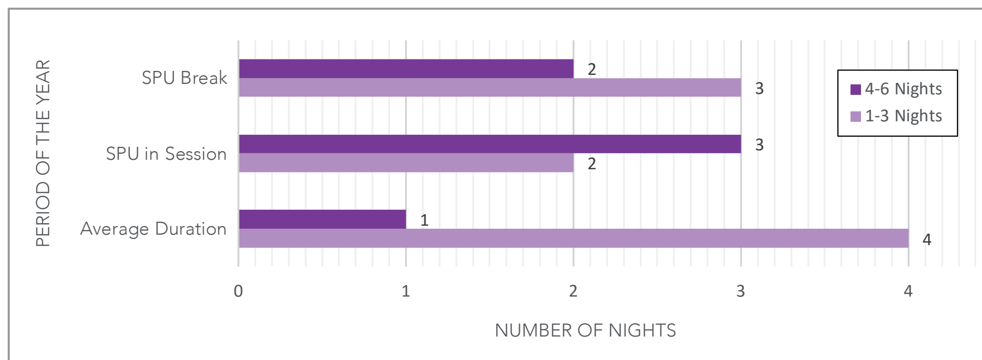
Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022

Tourism or visitors effects

An important part of universities are the academic and non-academic events that happen throughout the year. This attracts visitors through what has been referred to as MICE, *Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & and Exhibitions* (Zhou, 2021). One of the primary beneficiaries of MICE is accommodation businesses, and the duration of stay by MICE tourists and academic visitors plays an important role in transmitting economic impact in the local economy.

Of the five accommodation businesses surveyed, four had an average duration of stay of 1 to 3 nights, with one having an average duration of 4 to 6 nights (Figure 5, below). The results show a higher duration of stay when SPU is in session, a finding that suggests the presence of a positive contribution to MICE tourism in Kimberley.

Figure 5: Average duration of stay, university in session and on break/holiday. Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022



Due to the sample size, these figures might appear small; however, if these effects extrapolate to the entire accommodation sector in Kimberley, then their cumulative contribution to the region's tourism visits could be relatively significant. This is more so given that MICE tourism is often not driven by traditional tourist attractions but can induce return visits that ultimately contribute to the local economy That is, an academic might never have thought of visiting Kimberley, but attending a conference at SPU might influence their future vacation decisions in favour of this destination.

Multiplier Effects of SPU

Stock leakage from Kimberley

To compute the basic Keynesian multiplier, we use the question on total stock leakage from the surveyed businesses. Specifically, respondents were asked to state the percentage of their stock purchased outside of Kimberley. This expenditure flow is accounted for because

it is money the business receives and passes on to outside suppliers; as such, it does not stimulate local economic activity. In South Africa, most manufactured goods are produced in Gauteng; this means smaller provinces like Northern Cape and by extension, Kimberley tend to be net importers. Table 10, below, confirms the latter; just over half of the businesses indicated that they procure 80% of their stock outside the local economy. From an impact and value chain perspective, it is also interesting and encouraging to note that 41% procure all their stock locally.

Table 10: What percentage of your stock is purchased outside Kimberley? Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022; p-value = 0.074

Percentage	%	Before 2014	%	After 2014	%	Total
0%	47%	36	23%	6	41%	42
20%	1%	1	0%	0	1%	1
50%	3%	2	4%	1	3%	3
80%	43%	33	77%	20	51%	53
Total	100%	72	100%	27	100%	99

Relative to the employment impacts, which appear to be driven by new entrants, the two types of firms play unique roles in delivering the total impact of SPU on Kimberley. Seventy-seven percent of new entrants reported leakages as high as 80%, while more established enterprises claimed no leakage. The lower leakage of the more established enterprises shows that they are better integrated into the local economy through recruiting local supply networks for their stock requirements. This is a desirable result, as these companies play a crucial role in transmitting the bulk of the local economic impact from direct SPU expenditure flows. This means a substantial amount of an increase in expenditure obtained from the SPU population will be passed on to downstream enterprises, indicating stronger backward linkages and consequently larger multiplier effects.

Estimated multiplier

Using the leakage ratios in Table10, we come up with an estimated unweighted average leakage of 44%. The decision not to weigh is partly methodological and is quite common in the literature (see Saayman & Saayman, 2004 and van der Merwe, 2008). Assigning weights would have required collecting additional information, for example, on sales volumes, information that some businesses are often unwilling to share. Furthermore, the survey instrument was designed with time in mind and had to be as parsimonious as possible to encourage participation.

The realised value of this multiplier means that every rand spent by an individual from the SPU population generates R2.27 ($0.13[2]). This means that this expenditure creates an additional economic impact, *indirect* and *induced*, of R1.27 ($0.70). That is, every R1,000,00 ($59) worth of SPU related spending has the potential to create a total economic impact of R2,700,000 ($159). Accordingly, every R1,000,00 spent by individuals from the SPU population generates an additional R1.27 ($70) of economic impact, *indirect* and *induced*.

Economic Contribution of SPU to Kimberley and Frances Baard Municipality

The purpose of this section is to calculate the total economic impact resulting from SPU's presence in Kimberley and the district of Frances Baard. It is possible to calculate the university's total economic impact by considering various expenditure items related to the university. To carry out the analysis, we used expenditures made by university staff and students as the basis for our analysis. From the annual report, we were able to get the total recurrent expenditures exclusive of staff costs, but we had no detailed financial information that would have allowed us to break down the expenditures to determine how much was spent in the local economy. Determining which proportion should be considered in the analysis is difficult without knowing the sectoral destination of the university's payments. To better understand the size of this expenditure item, we examined the results of a study that was conducted on the University of Stellenbosch (BER, 2018). Just 16% of the R403,301,919 ($23,794,813) spent by the university remained in the local economy. According to this estimate, SPU's recurrent expenditures will be about R37,683,000 ($2,223,297) per year, which is small in comparison with the 42% (R216,900,00/$1,279,710) of total recurrent expenditures accounted for by personal costs. As a result, we opted to leave out this expenditure item since it would not have any sizable effect on the overall picture of the total economic contribution that we get from the combined direct spending of students and staff.

Direct, Indirect and Total Economic Impact of SPU Staff

The results of the economic analysis of the SPU staff are presented in Table 1. We present both the lower bound and upper bound estimates of population parameters based on the confidence levels obtained from the sample statistics. By doing this, we are able to see the possible range of values based on whether the population parameter is above or below the sample mean. The mean total staff net income was estimated at R167,940,594 ($9,908,495). The table also includes gross staff wages and salaries from the 2020 annual report of R229,762,000 ($13,555,958), an amount that is relatively close to the upper bound estimate of R203,227,723 ($11,990,435).

2 Calculated at R1=$0.059 rate of 23rd December 2022

*Table 1: Estimates of Direct, Indirect and Total Economic Impact of SPU Staff. Sources: Author Estimates, *SPU Annual Report 2020*

#	Item	Lower Bound	Mean	Upper Bound	SPU Staff Costs 2020*
A	Direct Staff Annual Income	R139,029,000	R167,940,594	R203,227,723	R229,762,000
A1	+ Total remittances, investment earnings & other business (10% of staff)	R525,175	R957,759	R1,390,342	
A2	**Total Direct Income**	**R139,554,175**	**R168,898,353**	**R204,618,065**	
C	Direct Staff Spending from Income (73%)	R101,874,548	R123,295,797	R149,371,187	R167,726,260
C1	+ Annual Staff Medical Aid Spending	R1,012,366	R795,548	R1,229,184	
C2	+ Annual Staff Visitor Spending	R1,012,366	R795,548	R1,229,184	
C3	**Total Direct Spending**	**R103,899,280**	**R124,886,893**	**R151,829,555**	**R167,726,260**
D	Total Economic Impact (2.27)	R235,851,365	R283,493,248	R344,653,090	R380,738,610
E	**Indirect + Induced Impacts [D – C3]**	**R131,952,085**	**R158,606,355**	**R192,823,535**	**R213,012,350**
F	**Lower Bound Estimate – 70%**				
F1	Direct Staff Spending from Income (70%) + C1 + C2	R99,712,654	R119,819,943	R145,691,013	
F2	Total Economic Impact (2.27)	R226,347,726	R271,991,270	R330,718,599	
F3	Indirect + Induced Impacts [F2 – F1]	R126,635,071	R151,160,981	R183,466,523	
G	**Upper Bound Estimate – 77%**				
G1	Direct Staff Spending from Income (77%) + C1 + C2	R109,481,447	R131,642,827	R160,014,277	
G2	Total Economic Impact (2.27)	R248,522,884	R298,829,218	R363,232,410	
G3	**Indirect + Induced Impacts [G2 – G1]**	**R139,041,437**	**R167,186,391**	**R203,218,132**	

Based on the sample, 10% of the staff were estimated to receive income from remittances and investments from outside Kimberley (see line item A1 in the table above). In order to calculate the estimated total direct staff income (line item A2), we calculated the average annual income receipts and applied them to 55 of the 550 employees in the 2020 annual report. From the survey, it was estimated that 70% to 77% of staff income is spent within the local economy, resulting in mean total direct staff spending of R123,295,797 ($7,274,452) (line item C), which is 73% of total income. We used the same approach to determine

medical expenses (line item C1) and the number of visitors from outside of town (line item C2). Respondents were asked to state the number of visits to a medical practitioner and the average amount spent per visit. An estimate of the number of visits per year, the duration of stay, and the average amount spent by out-of-town visitors were derived, and then the sample proportion of the staff that indicated that they received visitors was applied to the total staff population. As a result of these line items, we have estimated total direct spending between R103,899,280 ($6,310,058) to R151,829,555 ($8,957,944) per year within the local economy (line item C3). We then applied the multiplier to these amounts to get an estimated total economic impact of between R235,851,365 ($13,915,231) and R344,653,090 ($20,334,532 – that is, direct, indirect, and induced impacts). Therefore, we estimate that direct staff spending alone could have created R131,952,085 ($7,785,173) to R192,823,535 ($11,376,589) of additional economic income in the local economy, in the form of *indirect* and *induced* impacts. Panels F and G show the results of the lower (70%) and upper bound (77%) direct spending from staff income. This shows an estimated total economic impact between R330,718,599 ($19,512,397) and R363,232,410 ($21,430,712), lines F2 and G2, respectively.

Direct, Indirect and Total Economic Impact of SPU Students

Table 2 shows the sample distribution from the student survey, which includes both undergraduates and postgraduates. A total of 16% of the respondents indicated that they were from the Kimberley region when asked about their place of residence. Taking the sample proportion as a percentage, it was applied to the total student population of 2,349 for the year 2020. Consequently, 366 students were excluded from the analysis as their spending does not represent new injections into the local economy.

*Table 2: Where do you live when the university closes or where is your home address? Source: HSRC-SPU Kimberley Firm Survey 2022, *SPU Annual Report 2020*

Place of origin	Sample	%	Distribution of student population
Kimberley	44	16%	366
Northern Cape	79	28%	658
Outside Northern Cape	159	56%	1,325
Total	282	100%	2,349*

The expenditure of student visitors was included in the total direct expenditure, and following that, an estimate was made of how much of the total expenditure was spent in Kimberley. In Table 13, line item H2 shows the estimated total direct spending to be between **R63,767,864** ($3,762,304) and **R95,704,223 ($5,646,549)**. Applying the multiplier to line item H2 produced an estimated total economic impact between **R144,753,051**

($9,539,368) and **R217,248,587** ($1,017,667 – line item I). This means that direct student spending could have generated an additional **R80,985,187** ($4,778,126) to **R121,544,364 ($7,171,117)**, in the form of indirect and induced impacts.

Table 3: Estimates of Direct, Indirect and Total Economic Impact of SPU Students. Sources: Author Estimates

#	Item	Lower Bound	Mean	Upper Bound
H H1	Direct Annual Student Spending in Kimberley (80%) + Annual Student Visitor Spending	R63,206,971 R560,893	R78,754,628 R938,808	R94,314,276 R1,389,947
H2	**Total Direct Spending**	**R63,767,864**	**R79,693,435**	**R95,704,223**
I	Total Economic Impact (2.27)	R144,753,051	R180,904,098	R217,248,587
J	**Indirect + Induced Impacts [I – H2]**	**R80,985,187**	**R101,210,663**	**R121,544,364**
K	**Lower Bound Estimate – 78%**			
K1	Direct Student Spending (78%) + C1 + C2	R49,799,123	R62,288,663	R74,860,768
K2	Total Economic Impact (2.27)	R113,044,010	R141,395,264	R169,933,944
K3	Indirect + Induced Impacts [K2 – K1]	R162,843,133	R203,683,927	R244,794,713
L	**Upper Bound Estimate – 83%**			
L1	Direct Student Spending from Income (83%) + C1 + C2	R52,959,472	R66,226,394	R79,576,482
L2	Total Economic Impact (2.27)	R120,218,001	R150,333,915	R180,638,615
L3	**Indirect + Induced Impacts [L2 – L1]**	**R173,177,473**	**R216,560,309**	**R260,215,097**

Total Economic Impact and Contribution to District GDP

Considering the three components of impact described in Section 1.3, Table 4, summarises the total economic contribution. Based on the estimated total impact from the staff and students, the total economic impact is between **R380,604,416 ($22,455,661)** and **R561,901,677 ($3,062,199)**. To understand how important this contribution is to Kimberley and Frances Baard, we calculated the proportion of this total impact relative to provincial and district GDP. Since GDP estimates are not available below the district level, we took the provincial GDP for the Northern Cape for 2019 and Frances Baard's estimated contribution of 35.6%. The table indicates that the direct spending of the SPU population could have contributed between **1.6%** and **2.3%** of the district's annual GDP. To gain a deeper understanding of the magnitude of this contribution, we estimated the monthly GDP for Frances Baard. The results show that the annual total economic impact of SPU is between **19%** and **28%** of monthly district GDP.

Table 4: Total Economic Impact and Contribution to District GDP. Sources: Author Estimates

Item	Lower Bound	Mean	Upper Bound
Total Direct Impact (Staff + Student) Indirect + Induced Impacts (Staff + Student)	R167,667,144 R212,937,272	R204,580,329 R259,817,018	R247,533,778 R314,367,898
Total Economic Impact of SPU on Kimberley	**R380,604,416**	**R464,397,346**	**R561,901,677**
Northern Cape GDP (2019) Frances Baard Contribution to NC GDP 35.6% Monthly Frances Baard GDP (2019)	R68,441,000,000 R24,364,996,000 R2,030,416,333		
SPU Percentage Annual Contribution to District GDP	**1.6%**	**1.9%**	**2.3%**
SPU Percentage Monthly Contribution	**18.7%**	**22.9%**	**27.7%**

In a 2018 study by BER (2018) where they adopted an Economic Impact Assessment methodological design based on an analysis of demand and supply factors to show that Stellenbosch university contributes more than 15% of output and more than 18% of gross added generated in the municipality which is close to the 19% contributed by SPU. With SPU being a much stronger economic agent in the city compared to SU in Stellenbosch, SPU is expected to even contribute more than the 19% to 28% it currently contributes. Furthermore, this study focuses only on the demand factors (university expenditure, staff, student and visitors' expenditures and business activities) due to the young nature of the university where supply-side factors (human capital, research, innovation, technology transfer) are not yet adequately developed. While the university expenses will reduce over time as the university eases on its massive infrastructural development as a new university, the expected doubling of student and staff numbers resulting in more expenditures, growth in the number of businesses and business activities as well as visitors' expenditures could compensate for the drop in university expenses through infrastructural development.

Implications and Conclusion

Three implications could be drawn from the study. These implications relate to the university or higher education institutions, the policymakers and researchers, and academics in the field. Starting off with academics, the study adopts a multiplier effect to measure the economic impact of universities on their cities and regions. This multiplier effect is just one approach to understanding the economic impact of universities. While the study relates to university employment, it does not account for the economic impact of a skill-based approach (Bluestone, 1993). While the skill-based approach is closely linked to the human capital theory approach, Brown and Heaney (1997) along with other scholars have questioned its value compared to the economic-based approach adopted in this study. They argue that there is a substantial overestimating of the skill-based approach (Dyason et al.,

2019). Hence, the need for more empirical studies using the economic-based approach, especially within the South African context.

The second implication is the need for conscious acknowledgement of the economic impact of universities. As shown by the results of this study, there is little doubt that SPU is exerting a significant positive economic impact on Kimberley and the Frances Baard municipality, as indicated by total direct spending from the university's population. These expenditures were amplified by factoring in both the indirect and induced effects. This resulted in a substantial total impact that forms a relatively significant economic contribution to the region.

As anchor institutions, university managers must consciously position universities as agents for local economic development, especially those in rural and secondary cities. With the potential of increased students at most South African universities with the introduction of tuition-free education, the economic contribution of universities to their cities and regions can become even more substantial. This contribution can be achieved by enhancing the nature of engagement, partnerships, and collaboration towards local impact such as employment for locals, and supporting local businesses through explicit procurement policies among others. If conceptualised within an anchor university strategy, SPU can make a significant contribution to local employment, and play an economic leadership role through the procurement of goods and services that benefits the local supply chain beyond its academic function (McCauley-Smith et al., 2020). Jansen (2023) has warned that the corrupt relationship between universities and some local stakeholders, has constrained some universities from making the expected contribution to the local economy.

The study also has implications for the broader higher education and development policy landscape. This study demonstrates that higher education institutions play an essential role in supporting their immediate local economies. However, universities seldom appear in discussions of regional development, which are typically dominated by industrial, mining, and agricultural sectoral strategies. Universities also play a role in enforcing democracy, reducing inequality and reducing unemployment. According to the business survey conducted to estimate the multiplier for Kimberley, SPU has shown a positive impact on not only existing businesses but also new businesses that came on stream after 2014. As a result of SPU, both types of businesses reported that they had experienced an increase in business activity. Based on the university's direct employment contribution to the municipality and the estimated total economic impact, it is indisputable that SPU is one of the most important institutions in the local economy. This is regardless of whether other university expenditures were included or not. Its imperviousness to the business cycle and the boom-and-bust cycle of mining means that its contribution plays a vital role in the sustainability of the businesses and workers who depend on it. However, as argued by Nauffal (2019, p. 345), "there is little awareness of the full breadth of the aggregate fiscal benefits for the [city, region and] country generated by this sector", the university sector. Building from the quadruple helix concept, Kitagawa (2010) emphasized the importance of regional government policies in developing a strong link between universities and regional

advantage. Local, provincial, and national government departments need to increasingly integrate the university as a major player within development policy discourse, planning and implementation and even providing funding support for the university.

In conclusion, when one considers the economic impact of SPU on the local and regional economy within the context of a failing mining town, the university has the potential to contribute even more sustainably to the city and provincial economy. The university, however, needs to reposition its mandate to consciously consolidate its contribution to the local economy, finding new ways of engaging with its immediate and extended community while remaining focused on the academic core function of teaching, learning and research.

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Notes on Contributors

Lead author

Samuel Fongwa
Centre for Development Support, University of the Free state, South Africa / CODESRIA, Senegal
Samuel.fongwa@codesria.org
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0648-2536

Co-author

Stewart Ngandu
Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1523-6908

Co-author

Bongiwe Mncwango
Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2061-8847

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