

ENGAGEMENT AND
INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING THE



OF UNIVERSITIES AND
SCIENCE COUNCILS 2017-2019





WHY THIS PROJECT, NOW

A strong policy imperative to institutionalise “community engagement” in South African university policy and structure emerged in the mid-2000s. This was partly in reaction against growing industry influence on research, but also to ongoing and widespread poverty, inequality and unmet socio-economic needs.

When it comes to research and innovation, communities are very typically involved as recipients of one-directional flows of knowledge from “university experts”

In this mode of practice, communities are included as passive beneficiaries, and engagement can become exploitative and primarily to the benefit of the university or the individual student.

A key focus, for this project, is therefore to understand the conditions that facilitate and constrain communities to seek interaction with universities and science councils, and to use their knowledge resources to address their developmental needs.

Knowledge and power matters

Building relationships that take into account the agency of community partners across unequal knowledge and power divides is challenging.

This challenge is now increasingly recognised, albeit on a small scale, and has become

evident in more recent experimental mechanisms and strategies to facilitate knowledge flows. Examples include township-based science shops, or technology platforms catering for SMMEs and co-operatives, as well as numerous initiatives within the education, health and environmental domains.



QUESTIONS WE ARE ASKING

How are the structural effects of poverty and inequality lived, reproduced and responded to by actors in impoverished community-based settings?

What are the ways in which community-based actors address their livelihood challenges, and where are the spaces for agency and change?

How do community-based actors draw on their own existing (indigenous) knowledge systems?

Why and how do these actors choose to engage with academics and other intermediary actors?

How do community-based actors experience their interaction with highly educated academics, who likely are of a different race group, perceived as more powerful, and engaging through a different language?

What are the mechanisms through which individuals and households can organise to take control, to address specific needs in collaboration with universities and science councils?

Engagement between academics and communities should be about ‘extending knowledge resources’. It is not an activity that academics engage in as citizens, nor is it an ‘add-on’, but is core to their disciplinary commitments and identity as academics.



WHAT WE'RE DOING



CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Lead Partner: HSRC

- Three in-depth and critical case studies of university / science council interactive capabilities at work in three communities in South Africa
 - 1 | Square Kilometre Array, Northern Cape
 - 2 | Philippi Innovation Hub, Western Cape
 - 3 | Cofimvaba Technology for Rural Education and Development (Tech4RED), Eastern Cape

CAPACITY BUILDING

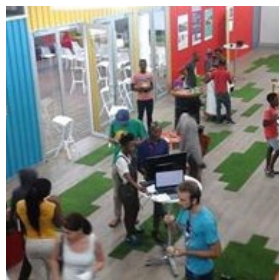
Lead Partner: UCT GSB & HSRC

- 15 bursaries for MPhil in Inclusive Innovation students at the UCT GSB
- Masters, PhD and post-doc research internships at HSRC

ADVOCACY

Lead Partner: SAHECEF

- Community-based research interactions and report backs
- University-based strategic workshops
- Reports and Policy Briefs
- Community Engagement Network





PROJECT PARTNERS

Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators, Human Sciences Research Council (CeSTII)
Education and Skills Development programme, Human Sciences Research Council (ESD)
Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town (UCT GSB)
South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF)



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Community Engagement
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