



Rhodes University & Durban University of Technology

**The role of
Community Engagement
in the reimagination
of Higher Education
during and post
the Covid 19 pandemic**

COVID-19 Guidelines

The COVID-19 pandemic is still with us and we all must be vigilant and protect ourselves and our colleagues. Below are some guidelines to ensure we minimise risks during our Symposium.

- All individuals accessing the premises **MUST** undergo temperature screening
- Everyone **MUST** wash and sanitize before entry to these places and as frequently as possible
- Avoid overcrowding and body contact. Keep a distance of one meter between each other
- Wear a **MASK** covering your mouth and nose at all times
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth at all times
- **AVOID** hand-shakes and hugging at all times
- If the weather allows, please have your tea and lunch outside
- If you are not feeling well or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, attend the symposium virtually.





MESSAGE FROM THE ORGANISERS

Since the 1990s, a number of scholars have pointed out the failure of higher education to solve the problems of society. In fact, higher education institutions are accused of being responsible for many of our present troubles because the existing paradigm of higher education ill prepares students for life. Further, it lacks relevance to the realities of the majority of people who are living in poverty; is unable to address the ongoing increase in unemployment, inequality, and violence, specifically in relation to children and women and, the pervasiveness of corruption. Importantly, higher education institutions' lack of preparation of not only students, but academics too, for uncertainty and change, which underpin life, was clearly demonstrated in their precarious response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Since the onset of Covid 19 and on a global scale, scholars have intensified questions on the purpose of higher education and the social responsibility roles of universities to bridge the ever-widening gap with communities. In South Africa, particularly, these concerns assume greater proportions when, between July 9 -18, in the midst of the pandemic, the first post-democracy insurrection rocked and shocked our nation and the world. It threw up starkly, again, the schisms in our society which is widely acknowledged as the most unequal in the world. These, and other certainties signal the imperative to change.

The call for the reimagination of education generally, and higher education in particular is growing globally. Our response to the crisis on individual, communal and societal levels has been and continues to be dependent on a number of factors. Imagining is an important part of being human. If we can imagine, then we are also capable of reimagining. A university was imagined a long time ago for a specific purpose and within a specific context. Context changes, perceptions and paradigms framing reality and the purpose of higher education must also change. Equally, the hegemonic university, forged on coloniality and colonial difference and dependent on Western knowledge systems that continue to undermine indigenous communities

must not remain uncontested. We need a kind of education that is consistent with the new needs and dilemmas of emerging knowledge cultures.

The major problems of our time, including the Covid 19 pandemic, are systemic and cannot be understood nor resolved in isolation. They necessitate a matrix of interconnections and interdependencies without which the fate of all humanity appears doomed. Furthermore, there is a need to view these problems as different facets of one single crisis, which is largely a crisis of perception. Higher education institutions subscribe to the concepts of an outdated worldview, a perception of reality inadequate for dealing with our interdependent and interconnected world.

We propose that Community Engagement is one of the more crucial and viable platforms currently in South African universities that can contribute towards changing and transforming the higher education system and, by extension, the skewed social order. The reimagination of higher education, as part of this Symposium, is one that we vigorously present and invite all participants to join us and consciously reimagine the purpose of higher education for the greater and common good.

RUCE & DUT Team





**RHODES UNIVERSITY, VICE CHANCELLOR,
DR SIZWE MABIZELA**



It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to the 2021 Community Engagement Symposium held under the theme 'The role of Community Engagement in the re-imagination of higher education during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.' We are deeply honoured and privileged to, once again, co-organise this symposium with our longstanding and reliable partner institution, the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

This symposium brings together colleagues from national and international universities and other communities to help us make sense of our world which has been turned upside down by the worst global health COVID-19 pandemic in more than a century. This pandemic has completely upended our lives and fundamentally changed, not only how we live, work and study, but also how we behave and interact with one another. Our everyday routines have been severely disrupted and the whole world had, at some point, come to a standstill.

It took this menacing and ever-present deadly virus to remind us just how interconnected our world was and just how interdependent we were with one another. This microscopic organism has made us realise the futility and shortsightedness of placing any significance and value on political, national or geographical boundaries, social or economic classes, race, gender or any other marker of difference. We are all equally vulnerable, we are all equally fragile, and we are all equally mortal. It has taught us that the overall health and wellbeing of a community demand that each member behave in a manner that seeks to maximise the good and safety of all. The health and safety of one person is inextricably bound up with the safety and wellbeing of all, and vice-versa. We must learn to live together as fellow human beings in conditions of human dignity, equality, fairness, justice and shared economic prosperity or we can perish together as fools. For as long as one part of the world is not safe, no part of the

world can be safe. If we understand this simple reality, we should learn to take care of one another and take better care of the one and only planet that we all share.

Thanks to this invisible organism, we have become aware of just how much the little joys and pleasures of life that we have always taken for granted matter. It took the restrictions on physical proximity and movement for us to appreciate the importance of human connection; a simple act of hugging and embracing to console one another in times of grief or in excitement with joy; the value of social interaction and human contact; a gift of a touch; an act of holding a hand to comfort a family member, friend or colleague.

We are still in the midst of this deadly pandemic. It is however not too soon to start to discuss the kind of a post-pandemic world that we would like to see. Let us use the many valuable lessons that this greatest crisis in human memory has taught us to create a better future for humanity.

4

We must confront obscene and unsustainable wealth disparities in our world; we must attend to issues of climate change; we must develop and sustain true global human solidarity; we must care for the vulnerable, destitute and in need.

This global health pandemic is, without a doubt, been a defining moment in many aspects of global development and engagement. No single country has been spared. For all its incalculable toll in human, economic and social devastation, the COVID-19 crisis is playing a significant catalytic role in forcing us to pause, rethink and reimagine the society and the world in which we live. It is not always that humanity is afforded an opportunity to start anew; a chance to build something new; an opportunity to reimagine itself and start afresh. This is what the COVID-19 pandemic has gifted humanity. This pandemic has taught us much and continues to teach us more with each passing day. So, the emerging view is that we should not spend time, energy and resources trying to bounce back to the pre-COVID era but must leap forward into a different and better tomorrow. We must seize the moment and forge ahead with



courage and conviction. We must harness this moment fundamentally to remake and reshape our society and the world in which we live.

The 'father of holography' and the 1971 Nobel Prize winner for Physicist, Dennis Gabor, noted that 'the future cannot be predicted, but futures can be invented.' It is what we do today that creates the future. We therefore should not be imprisoned by the current realities, but free ourselves to imagine what can be. We have learnt from the pandemic that uncertainty is the only certainty in life and that the more we might think we are in control of our destination, the less we are.

Notwithstanding the uncertainties, catastrophic loss of life and destruction of livelihoods, we must be ever optimistic as we work together to define and shape the future that is better and more sustainable. It is in forging productive and enduring partnerships between and among our institutions of higher learning and our communities that we can collectively co-create a better and sustainable future.

So, as we explore the role of Community Engagement in re-imagining higher education during and post the COVID-19 pandemic, let us tap into what we have learnt from the experience with this pandemic and fashion a more just, a more humane, a fairer, a more equitable, a more compassionate and a more inclusive world.

On behalf of our University and the Symposium Organising Committee, I wish to acknowledge with thanks and sincere appreciation our eminent keynote speakers who have graciously accepted our invitation for them to address this Symposium. We also wish to convey our profound gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to all presenters for their time and effort in preparing their presentations for this Symposium. We are equally grateful to those who will be presenting their posters. This Symposium would not have been possible without you.

May you, at the end of this important Symposium, experience a renewed sense of hope and optimism that tomorrow will be a better day than today!

MESSAGE FROM SAHECEF CHAIR



On behalf of the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF) I wish to congratulate the Organising Committee on assembling the Sixth Symposium on Community Engagement. It is an indication of our resilience that we are able to meet and report on our work with our community partners during these precarious times. We hope that the disruption that this pandemic has precipitated will resonate with the disruption that these symposia are renowned for and as indicated by the main theme of the current symposium. The reimagination of the university is necessary on a global scale and this symposium offers Community Engagement as a platform to start the reimagination of higher education movement.

The new hybrid approach will enable the interaction of national and international contributors to participate from home, while others meet in the manner in which we are accustomed. We particularly look forward to hearing from and engaging with the many speakers, especially those who will join us from abroad without experiencing South African hospitality while doing so. Perhaps we should all start working on polishing our online hospitality!

Darren Lortan





**VICE CHANCELLOR'S DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
AWARD WINNER 2021, MAPULA MAPONYA**

The Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Community Engagement Award is made annually to an individual, or group of individuals, who have distinguished themselves in Community Engagement, a core function of Higher Education Institutions.

It was with great pleasure that we announced Ms. Mapula Maponya, from the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics (AGCLE), as the recipient of the 2020 Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Award for Community Engagement.



Since university spaces are still among the most privileged spaces in our society, Education White Paper No. 3 (1997) urges higher education institutions to fulfil both a moral and political imperative to contribute to social and epistemic justice and equality through forming partnerships with communities outside of the university in order to restructure their teaching, learning and research practices. In fulfilling this imperative to promote and practice community engagement, universities move away from what has been their traditional role as disengaged 'ivory tower' institutions and become more socially-responsive institutions, championing the struggle against race, gender and class oppression by challenging, problematising, and hopefully changing (where appropriate) individual and collective attitudes through epistemic, pedagogical, psychosocial, and economic endeavours. While certain disciplines are thought to lend themselves more readily to incorporating community engagement into their teaching, learning and research practices, other disciplines with reputations for blue-sky research, theoretical knowledge production and limited field-work or practical activities often struggle to articulate their position within the community engagement landscape. The winner of this year's Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Award for Community Engagement, Ms. Maponya, has shown, through her work, how service-learning has catalysed important transformational work within the

department of philosophy, meaningfully contributed to the knowledge production and dissemination process within the discipline, and has served as a vehicle for the induction and training of ethically engaged students.

Ms. Maponya is a lecturer in the AGCLE and coordinates the year-long service-learning component of liNtetho zoBomi: Conversations About Life 101 and 102—the flagship, engaged ethics course run by the AGCLE and housed in the Philosophy Department. Her passion for education and commitment to community engagement with a decade of experience shines through her work. Ms. Maponya joined the AGCLE to design the service-learning course that led to this award. Her development, and ongoing facilitation of the service-learning component of IZ has been exceptional, with her and her team developing a deeply meaningful and committed relationship with the AGCLE’s community partner—Archie Mbolekwa Primary School. 280 IZ students, work annually with Archie’s learners, making it one of the largest, long running service-learning programmes at Rhodes.

8

The course started in 2016 and suffered many changes, overcoming the multiple obstacles that service-learning courses can have. Ms. Maponya was able to not only continued with the course but to develop it further by listening to the community partners, the learners and the students. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Maponya and her team succeeded in adapting to the changes, being responsive to the community partner’s needs and what the world circumstances allowed.

The impact of this inspirational service-learning course is seen on the university students, school learners, and the school. Students often remark on the impact of service-learning on their ethical development in their reflective journals. The school learners have shown and reported significant growth not only in terms of their English reading, writing and comprehension skills, but also in terms of their confidence and public speaking. The school is highly invested in the programme—including the principal, teachers, parents and learners. Indeed, the principal of Archie Mbolekwa has been so inspired by the service-learning aspect of liNtetho zoBomi



that he has recently registered at RU to study further towards a postgraduate degree in education. The quote below from the principal:

*"Miss Maponya is a true community leader;
she is passionate about the Grahamstown community
more especially the previously disadvantaged.
Her aim is to use education to change the circle of poverty our learner and their
parents are experiencing. Ms Maponya is an asset to our community.
Her dedication and accompanying zeal to what she does makes her tackle
challenges with great enthusiasm."*

Ms. Maponya herself has also been impacted by this journey. She has deeply invested in the Makhanda community for over 5 years and won the coveted Rhodes Volunteer of the Year Award in 2015. She is currently finishing her PhD on service-learning using liNtetho zoBomi as a case study. Mapula personifies what the scholarship of engagement is by advancing the nexus between community engagement, teaching and learning and research. The development of this service-learning course in philosophy has broader and deeply meaningful implications for the ways that philosophy is taught at universities, and for how future academics come to understand the relationship between any discipline – even those previously considered to be at odds with the principles and practice of community engagement – and the broader transformational goals of higher education.

The Award to Ms. Mapula Maponya was made at the Graduation in 2021. The public lecture on her work will be made at this Community Engagement Symposium.

Congratulations to Ms. Maponya!

Tuesday 19 October 2021

DAY 1

Programme (V = Virtual; F = Face to face)

VENUE A

08:00 - 09:00 **Registration**

09:00 - 09:30 Welcome - Rhodes University Vice Chancellor Dr. Sizwe Mabizela

09:30 - 10:15 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Eusebius McKaiser**

10:15 - 10:30 Q&A

10:30 - 11:00 **TEA**

11:00 *Knowledge and engaged research*

Sioux McKenna (V)

Who is our knowledge for? The nexus between research and community engagement

Evelyn Muthama (V)

Re-imagining the social purpose of a university:
A case of Rhodes University

Sesonasipho Yedwa (F)

Ukucingisisa: The role of Universities in advocating for social justice - shifting towards sustainable community engagement

Duke Mwedzi (F)

Education as Investment

13h00 **LUNCH**

14h00 *Workshops*

M R Lekoa and B. Nkonki-Mandleni

Engaging Communities during and post Covid-19:
A hybrid model to conduct community engagement

15h30 **TEA**

16:00 - 17:00 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Prof Budd Hall, University of Victoria**



PROGRAMME

VENUE 2

Building resilience for uncertainty

Zinhle Zulu, Adrie Haese and Qurban Rouhani (V)

Comics and community engagement: the co creation of an inland fishing business resource

Lombuso Precious Shabalala (F)

The role of Community Engagement in the reimagination of Higher Education: Achieving Tourism inclusive growth for Mapungubwe World Cultural Heritage Site Communities

Phumzile Xulu, Fanie Ndlovu, Someleze Diko, and Sibusiso Moyo (F)

Creating an Engagement Platform in the time of Covid-19: DUT's experience with the Engagement App

Nkhensani Susan Thuketana

Investigating Augmentative and Alternative Communication resources use in rural mainstream contexts

Wednesday 20 October 2021

DAY 2

Programme (V = Virtual; F = Face to face)

VENUE A

8:30/9:00	Registration
09:00 - 9:30	Welcome - Prof. Darren Lortan - Chairperson, SA Higher Education Community Engagement Forum
9:30 - 10:30	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: MacJannet Panel - Global Award Winners for the MacJannet Prize, Talloires Network
10:30 - 11:00	TEA AND POSTER PRESENTATION
11:30 - 13:00	<i>Early Childhood Development Discussions</i>
	Benita Bobo (F) Fostering transformative learning through community engagement in Higher Education: The case of Rhodes University
	BuddingQ Panel Panellists: Yolisa Jali, Sydney Nel, Uthandile Samela, Londeka Zulu (F) Facilitator: Anna Talbot Reflections of Student Leader Experiences in the Early Childhood Literacy Development Programme, BuddingQ
13:00	LUNCH
14:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Professor Tonya Huber, Texas A&M International University
14:45	<i>Transformation and reflection</i>
	Sithabiso Vilakazi (V) Reflections of volunteering in the S@M programme during the pandemic: Preserving relationships, innovating and reaching goals
	Hlengiwe Mlambo (F) We cannot have effective engagement in the absence of comprehension.
	Kelly Bernard, Jessica Cockburn, Joana Bezerra, Kathleen Smart, Kwanele Siyengo, Papama Yose, Alexandra Collett, Olwethu Dhlomo, Rebecca Farquharson, Michelle Maziofa (F) Fostering an ethic of care in higher education during the coronavirus pandemic
	Anna Talbot (Performance) (F) The youngest member at the table: An introspective performance piece on the journey to becoming an engaged citizen
16:30	Networking event & entertainment
17:00	Introduce Award and Winner - Dr Monnapula-Mapesela - DVC Academic and Student Affairs
17:10	2021 RU Vice Chancellors Distinguished Community Engagement Award Event - winner Ms Mapoya Maponya



PROGRAMME

VENUE 2

CE and empowering communities

Katy Pepper & Lumka Nkanyana (F)

Leading from the frontline: NGOs, community engagement and sustainable development - a case study

Thandiwe Matyobeni (F)

Adapting to the digital present: Social Innovation Hub Digital Resource Center

Julie Adair (V)

Digital Storytelling in Healing

Rene Oosthuizen (F)

Communities as vital resources in disaster risk management at local government level

Thursday 21 October 2021

DAY 3

Programme (V = Virtual; F = Face to face)

	VENUE A
8:30- 9:00	Registration
09:00 - 9:15	Welcome - Diana Hornby Director Community Engagement
9:15 - 10:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Rhodes University DVC Research & Innovation - Dr. Peter Clayton
10:00 - 11:30	<i>Community Engagement and Social Change</i> Nigel Machiha (F) Student social responsibility: educating for life and for a living-what challenges Phakamani Pungu-Pungu (F) The effect of politicisation of education in community building and engagement; where have we gone wrong and how do we fix our schools? Claire McCann (F) Volunteerism: nurturing academic activists, expanding the classroom Joyce Sewry, Akhona Ngqinambi, Ken Ngozoa (F) Attitudes to Science when doing Kitchen Chemistry at Science Clubs
11:30 - 12:00	TEA
12:00 - 13:30	<i>Community Engagement and Higher Education Institutions</i> Diana Hornby & Margie Maistry (F) Community Engagement and the Cultivation of Humanity: Repositioning the purpose of HE Samantha Ncula (V) Oblivious to Observant Lukhanyiso Cezula and Lebogang Nkambule (F) The role of student volunteers in the transformative agenda of Rhodes University and the Makhanda community
13:30	Conclusion
14:00	LUNCH



PROGRAMME

VENUE B

Service-Learning Discussions

Thandiswa Nqowana & Gill Rennie (V)

Introduction and implementation of a service learning course during a pandemic:
A focus on educational journalism during a pandemic

Heide Kuhlane (F)

Service Learning Curriculum Adjustment and Adaptive Leadership Development as a
Consequence of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Joana Bezerra (F)

The role of service-learning in promoting citizenship - reflections from South Africa

Parent engagement, Parent role in education

Mpumelelo Dywili (V)

lingxelo zokuthatha inxaxheba kwinkqubo yeVulindlela njengomsebenzi
wedyunivesithi yaseRhodes

Nicci Hayes, Nikki Green, Boniwe Msimango, Nolly Shelle and Vatiswa Joni (F)

Re-kindling parents' engagement in education

Dr Margie Childs (V)

Wordless Picture Books in action: An adventure connecting home, school
and university

PAPER PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS



ABSTRACT

**DAY 1: TUESDAY, 19 OCTOBER
MORNING**

KNOWLEDGE AND ENGAGED RESEARCH

Sioux McKenna, Rhodes University (V)

Who is our knowledge for? The nexus between research and community engagement

As knowledge is increasingly packaged as a product for the knowledge economy, so it becomes difficult to argue that it should have use-value rather than exchange-value. That is, knowledge should be useful, a common good, directed at the wellbeing of people and the planet, and not simply something one can exchange for a patent or publication, which is often only a private good. I reflect on the ways in which knowledge is sometimes economized in the academy so that it is numbers of publications and citations that count, rather than impact. In response to this 'metrification of academic performance', many countries have now brought in 'impact frameworks' to ensure that research being done has positive social effects. I will look briefly at the rise of the impact agenda internationally and consider how, despite good intentions, these processes have been subsumed by the dominant metrification of academic activity and become yet another compliance mechanism. After raising these concerns, I draw on the notion of 'engaged research', knowledge that is designed to be a social good and which is contextually aware, to counter this trend. To do this, I will reflect on some examples of engaged research undertaken by academics and PhD scholars in the university where I work to consider how we need to speak about research separately from the language of academic performativity.

ABSTRACT

Evelyn Muthama, Rhodes University (V)

Re-imagining the social purpose of a university: A case of Rhodes University

In the last two decades the identity and purpose of universities globally and nationally have changed. Most universities have taken up an identity of markets in competition with each other for consumers. This is despite being different in types and the contexts within which they are located. This paper which is a case of a university in South Africa reflects on the identity of the institution in relation to its social purpose of engagement with community. Around the world universities are expected to demonstrate connection to community and public. In South Africa, the White Paper 3 of 1997 indicates that universities have the social responsibility of engaging with its various communities. Engagement with community can take many different forms, from ad-hoc volunteer projects on one end of the continuum to curriculated service-learning on the other. The kinds of engagement and extent to which the university is engaged relates in part to how a university identifies its core academic project. The academic project is the particular way in which a university understands its key purposes within the higher education landscape. While all universities share aspects of their academic project through teaching, research and community engagement, every university in South Africa is meant to have its own version of the academic project. Community engagement is one way in which a university can re-imagine its identity and purpose. This paper reflects on how the identity of community engagement as a social role of the university was understood at Rhodes University: a traditional and research intensive university located in a semirural area. I argue that there is need for reflecting on and understanding the forms of community engagement within institutions and how this emerges from multiple factors at play.



ABSTRACT

Sesonasipho Yedwa, Rhodes University (F)

**Ukucingisisa: The role of Universities in advocating for social justice
- shifting towards sustainable community engagement**

South Africa (SA) is a country riddled with a troubled past due to a variety of factors such as unjust regimes of colonialism and apartheid, amongst other things. Consequently, part of reshaping the democratic SA involves efforts to redress and move towards a social justice approach to locate equity and narrow the widening chasm between the rich and poor. Paphitis and Kelland (2016) argue that social movements such as Rhodes Must Fall, Fees Must Fall and other protests rooted in the fight against inequality have illuminated the need for social justice, thus highlighting institutions of higher education as having a pivotal role to play by enhancing civic culture in students through community engagement. Similarly, the Covid-19 pandemic has also exacerbated some of the challenges in SA and necessitated a need for meaningful change. I thus, contend that universities must see their role as social justice advocates in times of uncertainty such as these. Universities cannot be bystanders, after all, what affects society will also spill over to these institutions, which will then affect these institutions' efficiency as well. This is how a system works. In my presentation, I will contest that universities can use their resources, curriculum and scholarship to advance social justice in SA, should they seize the opportunity for meaningful change and sustainable development. It is, however, worth noting that these pursuits for social justice can only succeed if universities rethink the principles of community engagement that they employ.

Keywords: social justice, higher education, community engagement, South Africa

ABSTRACT

Duke Mwedzi, Rhodes University Sociology Department (F) **Education as Investment**

The value of education is traditionally measured by its ability to prepare young adults for high quality, productive employment. As a result, higher education is often viewed as a means to an end whose benefits are only commercial. This economic view reduces education to a qualification that can be bought for individual benefit and sold for institutional profit.

Taking a more developmental and holistic approach, this presentation argues that education should be considered an investment that pays dividends for both the graduate and their community at large. By gaining access to valuable social networks and exposure to a wide range of ideals, higher education can improve the conditions of students from marginalized backgrounds. For students from more privileged backgrounds, a university education can increase their awareness of the social issues in their immediate surroundings. Such an approach to education has the dual effect of creating opportunities for disadvantaged students, while at the same time galvanising privileged students to be proactive in their communities. This presentation will draw on social capital theory and the social investment policy orientation to reflect on the possibilities within a developmental approach to higher education.

ABSTRACT

BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR UNCERTAINTY

Zinhle Zulu, Adrie Haese and Qurban Rouhani, University of Johannesburg and Rhodes University (student and staff) (V)

Comics and community engagement: the co creation of an inland fishing business resource

Fishing in Africa is deeply intertwined in the identity, culture, and traditions of many people, yet small scale fisheries in South Africa remain largely underdeveloped and excluded from the legislative framework. Traditional fishers based at the Vanderkloof Dam have, who use a method of catching fish by means of stone kraals, have over the years, developed their own methods and networks on selling fish. While the fishery is currently operational, the business component of their endeavours could be enhanced. Most of the kraal fishers have low levels of literacy or a limited ability to read and write. As such, traditional, text-heavy business information resources remain difficult to access.

To assist these fishers to develop their entrepreneurial skills, a research project was initiated with the aim of co-creating a business resource that would be accessible to them. Nontraditional texts such as comics and graphic novels are receiving increased attention for their use in not only education, but in contexts such as medicine and contract law. The authors reflect on the process of conceptualising the project as a collaboration between two Higher Education Institutions, the development of the topic into a MA topic and the co creation of the resource with community participants.

Whereas the resource was positively received by participants, the study raised questions about how communities, where issues of poverty and historical segregation are rife, might be accurately represented in such a resource. Final feedback on the comic suggested that the fishers' identities were central to the narrative. The impact of COVID19 on the project, and the further development of the resource for digital distribution is also elaborated on.

ABSTRACT

Lombuso Precious Shabalala, University of Mpumalanga (F)

The role of Community Engagement in the reimagination of Higher Education: Achieving Tourism inclusive growth for Mapungubwe World Cultural Heritage Site Communities

Purpose: Using Mapungubwe World Cultural Heritage Site Communities as a case study, this paper examines the role of community engagement as tool for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as the institutions reimagine and actively engage about possible ways that can be utilised to achieve tourism inclusive growth during and post Covid-19. Community engagement (CE) tourism projects of a more holistic approach to cultural heritage tourism (CHT) becomes vital. CHT is presented as a vehicle that can be utilised by HEIs in regard to protected heritage areas towards mitigating poverty alleviation and socio-economic development, and thus addressing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 8 and 11. Since the world is currently faced with the global pandemic known as COVID-19, negatively impacted the entire tourism sector's value chain, and in fact shut it down. The outbreak occurs at the time when most countries, in particular developing economies, rely on the tourism sector to create and sustain the needed jobs. Therefore, igniting tourism becomes paramount. **Methodology:** A sequential mixed method was adopted for this study. A combination of semi-structured interviews or focus groups were conducted with 15 participants and a further 100 structured surveys were administered. Content analysis and SPSS were used to analyse the data. **Findings:** Key finding is that community engagement initiatives by HEIs could play an important role on igniting tourism during this hard time and beyond, also ensure a sustainable inclusive growth within the tourism sector. However, radical transformation and diversity in its true sense must first take place in order to give domestic tourism through CHT a chance.

Implications: Community involvement from the initiation stage is vital because imposing a development upon communities could result in disputes and result to no community support and destroy any possible chance of inclusive growth.



Conclusion: Beyond reasonable doubt, transformation and diversity is key towards the efforts of effecting tourism inclusive growth. Most importantly, HEIs should advocate for such initiatives to appreciate the bottom-up strategy doubled with active community participation in order to ensure inclusive growth beyond COVID-19 Pandemic.

ABSTRACT

**Phumzile Xulu, Fanie Ndlovu, Someleze Diko, and Sibusiso Moyo,
Durban University of Technology**

Creating an Engagement Platform in the time of Covid-19: DUT's experience with the Engagement App

One of the most important ways to support community engagement at universities is to showcase what the University is engaging in through its staff, students, alumni, and social partners. To this end, the Durban University of Technology developed an Engagement App, an online platform used by its staff, students, and partners to report on their engagements.

The development of the engagement app is one of the innovative and effective means to engage the University Community on community engagement while learning more about what each is doing to support other communities while also creating spaces for collaboration and partnerships. This presentation is based on DUT's experience with the app told from the Community Engagement Practitioners' experiences working with app developers and using the app for showcasing, reporting, and collaboration with others.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Universities are evolving many engagement activities like online meetings, virtual learning and development, webinars with industry experts, online courses, classroom training modules digitally, e-learning modules, and many more creative learning sessions. The engagement app is another way that ensures that engagement between staff, students, and partners on community engagement continues and is visible and that staff and students are learning new skills and developing themselves. In this way, Community Engagement Practitioners are feeling committed to the work and stay motivated during this tough time of the COVID-19 pandemic.



ABSTRACT

**DAY 1: TUESDAY, 19 OCTOBER
AFTERNOON**

M R Lekoa, University of Zululand; B. Nkonki-Mandleni, Mangosuthu University of Technology

**WORKSHOP: Engaging Communities during and post Covid-19:
A hybrid model to conduct community engagement**

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted delivery of community engagement (CE) and uncovered the limitedness of our higher education business models which impact negatively on community engagement. The prevailing norm of engaging communities which is mainly contact because of its participatory nature to promote authenticity now requires rethink to embrace social distancing. The pandemic has, however, not only brought gloom but is presenting opportunities of embracing the technologies alongside human contact during the pandemic and post COVID-19. This submission therefore presents a hybrid community engagement model for discussion to continue with CE during and post COVID-19. Hybrid engagement is the 'New Normal' intended to help in the design of strategies, processes and technologies to systematically engage communities with organisations in order to maximise the value institutions of Higher Learning co-create with the communities. It is a model of carrying out community engagement (CE) that does not compromise, but provides constant engagement with communities engaged. The model brings about a differentiated value proposition that unravels novelty, robust and timely delivery of community engagement. Community assets are used to invent, reinvent and revive abandoned ideas and knowledge to enhance the welfare of communities while instilling the needed social skills to the communities engaged. Universities need to learn to have unprecedented and inclusive collaborations to deliver on CE. This model allows universities and communities to jointly leverage strengths, resources and expertise in the use of technology to carry out tasks that require social distancing using varied channels of engagement. The model does not preclude local and international partnerships with the industry, civic society and governments.

ABSTRACT

Nkhensani Susan Thuketana, University of Pretoria

WORKSHOP: Investigating Augmentative and Alternative Communication resources use in rural mainstream contexts

South Africa is a global village that ratified the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 4 aims to eradicate poverty and offer quality education to all learners, including special needs. Learners with special educational needs, present with physical, cognitive, emotional, and social challenges that impact their progression with typical peers in mainstream schools. The challenges require a multidisciplinary team's collaborative effort to facilitate learners' access to the school curriculum. Furthermore, the support needed encompasses technology use, facilitation of language development, and encouraging peer participation. However, evident and glaring issues influence progress in using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) resources to enhance curriculum access for learners with little or no functional speech. AAC is a teaching approach that encourages learners' communication and uses resources ranging from low to high technology devices.

A project was conducted to explore AAC use and share research-based strategies with education stakeholders in identified rural schools. Sixty participants characterising teachers, assistant teachers, psychologists, occupational therapists, nurses, and district-based support teams, were part of the project that took 15 days to conclude. The project used qualitative, participatory action research (PAR) underpinned by Kolb's interactive learning cycle of active experimentation, reflective observation, concrete experience, and abstract conceptualisation.

Kolb's steps resumed with face-to-face and open-ended interview questions. The researcher used the responses to customize training according to the themes that emerged. The themes included lack of AAC support resources in schools, lack of consultation in the resources purchasing processes, and insufficient training opportunities. The project concluded by suggesting a community of practice (CoP) approach among the professionals to facilitate AAC skills in mainstream schools.

ABSTRACT

**DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, 20 OCTOBER
MORNING**

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSIONS

Benita Bobo, Durban University of Technology (F)

Fostering transformative learning through community engagement in Higher Education: The case of Rhodes University

Research in South Africa and elsewhere in the world has shown that participating in community engagement activities may lead to transformative learning. This is because these activities are an opportunity for student volunteers and community partners to access experiences that allow them to enhance their reflections and encourage more introspection. Additionally, through participating in community engagement activities, student volunteers and community partners become better able to understand themselves and their communities, as well as social problems in general.

Using a social constructivist approach, within the social action model of community psychology, this presentation looks at how being involved in community engagement activities may foster transformative learning; not only for student volunteers but also for community partners. In particular, it looks at to what extent student volunteers and community partners involved in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Residence programme experience transformative learning.

This presentation demonstrates how the Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) division has made strides towards forming collaborative community engagement partnerships based on aspects of transformative learning. In addition, this presentation provides valuable insight into how carefully managed community engagement partnerships in higher education have the potential to contribute to the transformation agenda of higher education institutions, while promoting equitable societies.

ABSTRACT

BuddingQ Panel

Panellists: Yolisa Jali, Sydney Nel, Uthandile Samela, Londeka Zulu

Facilitator: Anna Talbot

Reflections of Student Leader Experiences in the Early Childhood Literacy Development Programme, BuddingQ

This panel discussion will explore the reflections and insights from student leaders in the BuddingQ programme. Student leaders are drawn from across faculties in the university but share the common goal of improving early childhood literacy development in Makhanda and South Africa.

BuddingQ is an early literacy programme that supports local communities in offering good quality, holistic school readiness programmes to improve early childhood literacy development. The name 'BuddingQ' speaks to the growth of a child's EQ and IQ. This is done by preparing the brain for formal literacy through motor skills development, such as crossing the midline, eye-tracking, and manipulation of objects (e.g., a pen, or a book). Research has shown the correlation between movement and a child's literacy development (Excell & Linington, 2011). Many of the children entering the school system struggle to meet the demands of schooling. They're not 'school ready'. This has negative effects for further schooling and ultimately in their lives. Through developing emergent literacy skills, we hope to address the challenge of schooling and learning in our city. BuddingQ is currently engaged with several local Grade R classes in schools across Makhanda. BuddingQ also has the dual aim of promoting critical and active citizenship of students and community partners by engaging and introducing them to community engagement activities. Student volunteers work with teachers and learners, weekly, to present this structured, play-based motor development intervention.

In this panel the BuddingQ student leaders will interrogate the impact volunteerism has had on their academic learning and university experiences. As well as how



they have gained understanding of the transformative role universities play and their own social responsibility to do so. Concluding the presentation, there will be a concise conversation on youth making social change for youth, including the practical steps they have taken before and during the Covid-19 pandemic to shape the communities they are in, both with BuddingQ and other community engagement initiatives.

ABSTRACT

AFTERNOON

TRANSFORMATION AND REFLECTION

Sithabiso Vilakazi, Rhodes University (V)

Reflections of volunteering in the S@M programme during the pandemic: Preserving relationships, innovating and reaching goals.

The Covid-19 virus has enforced many changes across the board and these changes have spilt-over to the day-to-day activities such as volunteering. The effects of the changes have not only presented negatives, as opportunities have emerged as well during a devastating period. The pandemic has helped us recognize the needs of our communities and be innovative as we make attempts to address the challenges that face our communities. Part of the responses were to swiftly transition to using online platforms and break the norms of using face-to-face contact in our attempts to achieve our community development goals. Before the pandemic, volunteerism was constant and consequently it was easier to keep relationships going, as there were less barriers and less pushes for innovation. This presentation will showcase my reflections of volunteering in the Siyakhana at Makana (S@M) programme during the pandemic, as well as present some of the knowledge that I have acquired during such a time. Additionally, I will present the adaptations I have had to make in my volunteering in order to ensure that our goals are reached and relationship remain intact. Much to highlight that no matter what comes our way, we can still continue engaging in effective community work with our community partners.

Keywords: S@M programme, reflections, volunteerism, Covid-19 pandemic, relationships, goals



Hlengiwe Mlambo, Rhodes University (F)

We cannot have effective engagement in the absence of comprehension.

Working towards meaningful engagement calls for working models to look at issues and opportunities that could be presented by language. Language issues might often subtly creep in as a perspective that discourages others to participate or as a barrier to effective communication. On a positive note, community engagement offers exposure to the 'foreign' language as a tool for the acquisition of the language. Nelson Mandela is famously quoted to say, 'If you talk to a man in a language he understands that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart'. Grounded by ideals of an asset-based model of community engagement, our understanding needs to be shifted from the traditional perspective of 'social development' being charity for the university student to it being a mutually informative endeavour, serving all parties involved.

'Language is the fundamental institution of society, not only because it is the first institution experienced by the individual but also because all other institutions are built upon its regulatory patterns' (Berger and Berger 1976 in Cooper 1989: 182). However, as a basic tool of communication used almost unconsciously, issues and even opportunities that arise from it are scarcely considered outside of studies that are in language departments. The space of community engagement not only provides a platform to highlight language issues within higher education pedagogy and research, but it also presents a space to influence social change by adapting language planning.

This paper uses personal reflections of an early career researcher and student volunteer leader, to explore an understanding of community engagement that will significantly accelerate the transformation and social change ideas students within higher education have to offer.

Kelly Bernard, Jessica Cockburn, Joana Bezerra, Kathleen Smart, Kwanele Siyengo, Papama Yose, Alexandra Collett, Olwethu Dhlomo, Rebecca Farquharson, Michelle Maziofa, Rhodes University (F)

Fostering an ethic of care in higher education during the coronavirus pandemic

Globally, higher education adapted to a 'new normal' of teaching and learning within the constraints of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. This entailed a shift from conventional face-to-face classes, to online teaching and learning. Online teaching and learning required careful planning to accommodate various difficulties, including the socio-economic inequalities experienced with the use of online platforms. This study presents an analysis of a teaching and support intervention tailored to address particular adverse impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on higher education in a South African university. In response to the new online method of teaching and learning, the Department of Environmental Science (DES) at Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape organized and facilitated a reflection process to aid the Honour's class in achieving their academic goals, and maintaining their overall wellbeing. This intervention was inspired by growing emphasis on ethics of care in light of the challenges of the pandemic. The reflection process included voluntary bi-monthly Reflection and Support Group (RSG) meetings using the Zoom platform that focused on overall wellbeing. The facilitators of the RSGs were three DES staff members, who, along with seven of the RSG participants from the Honour's class, are the authors of this paper. The authors reflected on their experiences of the teaching and support intervention offered by the DES in 2020, and synthesized and thematically analyzed their findings to better understand the outcomes of the process. Two main themes emerged, which were, (1) the overall benefits of the reflection process, and (2) the difficulties in online learning. The findings of this study highlight critical lessons regarding teaching reflection in higher education using an online platform, from both staff and students' perspectives, and ultimately, on fostering a sustainable ethic of care in higher education for years to come.



Anna Talbot, Rhodes University (performance)

The youngest member at the table: An introspective performance piece on the journey to becoming an engaged citizen

What is engaged citizenship?

How do we nurture and develop young people to being ethical, engaged citizens?

What responsibility do education institutions have to foster active citizenship?

This performance piece will journey with the audience through the life of Anna Talbot, a lifelong engaged citizen. Anna has many poignant experiences that have shaped her personal ethics, passions, and career. It is through these experiences that she has come to deeply understand her role as an engaged citizen in community development. However, this journey has been riddled with challenges – the most significant of these being her age. Often as the youngest member at the table, Anna has had to negotiate and advocate for the inclusion of ‘young ideas’ in the decision making of adult authorities.

Anna seeks to answer some pertinent questions on engaged citizenship through a multimedia, interactive display. Through this she explores the role volunteerism has played in her growth as an active and engaged citizen. And the role of youth in creating a more just and equitable society.

This performance will explore the role of upbringing, community, age, language and personal histories in educating and including young people as active and engaged citizens.

This personal presentation will be followed by a short intergenerational discussion on the role of community engagement in building citizens for South Africa.

ABSTRACT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Katy Pepper & Lumka Nkanyana, Ubunye Foundation/Rhodes University (F)

Leading from the frontline: NGOs, community engagement and sustainable development - a case study

By the 4th April 2020, the Ubunye Foundation, an NGO based in Ngqushwa, Eastern Cape had a COVID-19 Rapid Response Strategy in place: React, Adapt and Build. This was 7 days after the first national Lockdown began. The impact of the lockdown on the communities with whom Ubunye works was almost immediate: food supplies ran out as household gardens, stores, local spaza shops and pop-up stalls emptied. Ubunye's React got to work sourcing emergency food supplies; getting food, masks, and sanitizer to ECD centres to distribute via local networks to vulnerable families they had identified. Adapt needed to start well before React had finished. Ubunye's livelihoods partners adapted from tourist crafts to mask-making and sanitiser bottling; ECD practitioners swapped classroom learning for learner home visits to distribute fun-learn materials, food supplies, and screen children for abuse and neglect; and Ubunye's vast savings programme network adapted its communication system into a WhatsApp COVID-19 information superhighway. By September 2020, Ubunye's community-led programmes were looking at Build - building back better: food security solutions, income generation with financial planning and efficient use of community health resources.

Community-led NGOs, like Ubunye, are always on the frontline, but we can't do it alone. We need partners: donors, other NGOs, government, and institutions with expertise like universities. What we shouldn't have to do, is bend ourselves to fit the 'needs' of these partners, although we always end up having to do it. This paper calls for partners to re-vision their support to NGOs: let us take the lead in what needs to be done, fit in with what we need to survive and trust our road to sustainable development because, as our response to COVID-19 has shown, we have demonstrated our expertise time and time again.



Thandiwe Matyobeni, Rhodes University (F)

Adapting to the digital present: Social Innovation Hub Digital Resource Center

The Covid-19 pandemic required university communities to rapidly adapt to increased dependency on low technologies and acclimatisation to online environments. As a digital resource centre whose mandate is to provide stakeholders in community and social development with access to digital tools, the Social Innovation Hub became vital in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on its surrounding communities. The Social Innovation Hub is a Rhodes University Community Engagement project that aims to facilitate social cohesion in communities by supporting social innovation through increasing access to digital tools and training. As a result of the pandemic, the Hub had to adapt its activities to online formats while continuing to fulfil its mandate to challenge the persisting digital divide in Makhanda, South Africa. These adaptations, their limitations and challenges and successes can form a foundation for making digital social innovation in universities and community engagement a priority over the next decade. This is vital for mitigating the digital divide and consequently improve communities' access to life opportunities and support for social innovations.

Julie Adair, Glasgow Caledonian University (V)

Digital Storytelling in Healing

In this presentation, I explore the place of digital storytelling in healing, specifically in the healthcare context and in the political landscape. I share with you some definitions of digital storytelling and experiences of those leading and taking part in digital story circles. I highlight where digital storytelling is having the most impact and where the innovators are in this space. In 2016, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) was awarded funding from the European Commission to develop a project to identify, showcase and connect social innovation projects to each other and to the wider world. The partnership with six Universities in South Africa, including Rhodes, and six institutions in Europe became Common Good First, an award-winning

initiative which launched an online platform (Commongoodfirst.com), a series of digital labs across South Africa and a digital storytelling methodology which was developed and piloted between Rhodes, University of South-Eastern Norway and GCU. The digital storytelling component of Common Good First has had the most lasting impact. Through conference presentations and papers, the concept of digital storytelling was introduced to a range of audiences from the USA to Australia, prompting further exploration of the genre amongst community projects and academics across the globe. I show a few digital stories so that we may reflect on how and where this innovative way of sharing our lived experiences can give voice to the voiceless and grow their confidence and skills.

Rene Oosthuizen, Rhodes University (F)

Communities as vital resources in disaster risk management at local government level

Disasters cause disruptions to communities and have affected both social and economic aspects of society, with developmental initiatives particularly hard hit. In this context, the Covid 19 pandemic has resulted in major development setbacks in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for developing countries. The Covid 19 pandemic has presented new challenges for development and has exacerbated the growing vulnerabilities of communities and exposed the underlying problems within them. Communities that are vulnerable at times display great strength and capabilities in the face of difficult times. The capacities of communities are often rooted in knowledge, skills and resources that are overlooked when official response plans are made.

This paper is based on the fundamental premise that because vulnerable communities are the first responders when disaster strikes, their capacities, gifts and skills should be identified, mobilised and applied in the management of disasters. Asset-based community development may be useful to local government given the fact that local government needs to perform disaster risk management with limited resources. Vital assets vested in communities, such as knowledge of



safe and vulnerable areas, experience of past disasters, knowledge of warning signs, survival methods and social relations, help communities cope during disasters or hardships and can be very useful for local government for effective disaster risk management. Local government is functioning within a context of limited funding, and for that reason, community assets ought to be recognised, quantified, and harnessed to effectively prepare for the impacts of disasters. Communities must be seen as resources and not the cause of the vulnerabilities they face. With the shift away from a reactive to a proactive approach to managing disasters, the role of ordinary people in the community has moved to centre stage. Government needs to sit up and take notice and make the most of this under-tapped resource.

ABSTRACT

**DAY 3: THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER
MORNING**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: DVC Research Dr. Clayton

Rewarding the True Impact of Engaged Research

Traditional impact measures for research are well established and widely used, and are largely built upon bibliometric measurements. While engaged research is publishable like any other form of research, and subject to this kind of impact assessment through publication influence, the true extent of social or environmental impact is not easily captured through citations. The result is that some vital social and environmental research ends up being under-valued, and consequently under-resourced, to the detriment of society and the planet. This talk will discuss some of the ideas that have been put forward to formalise alternative metrics for evaluating the impact of engaged research.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Nigel Machiha, Rhodes University (F)

Student social responsibility: educating for life and for a living- what challenges

According to Valdivia et al. (2020: 2), social responsibility is defined as an ethical dimension reflecting the link between established society and the organization. According to Martha Nussbaum (1997), students should be taught to critically examine their own traditions, understand the ties that bind all people together, and have empathy for the experiences of others. Educational institutions such as Rhodes University, play a key role, in facilitating a space in which students can exercise their student social responsibility. During his inaugural address, Dr. Sizwe Mabizela repositioned Rhodes University, as an institution that is not just in



Grahamstown [now Makhanda] but is also of and for Grahamstown [Makhanda]" (Rhodes University, 2019: 3).

The Rhodes University Community engagement division has not only been crucial in bridging the gap between the community and university. But it has also been instrumental in shifting the purpose of higher education from that of producing students for the labor market to one that plays a key part in the integral development of students, that is, emphasizing the interconnection of mind, body and heart. RUCE provides a space through which all students and staff are able to put into action their civic and social responsibility through various community engagement activities and programmes ranging from formal volunteerism to credit bearing programmes (Rhodes University, 2021).

I will speak on the role that RUCE, has played in transforming the community of Makhanda, whilst simultaneously producing socially responsible students. From experience of being a volunteer, student leader, and community engagement researcher, I will speak on the intersection, between transformation, volunteerism, engaged research and service learning. I will argue that initiatives such as the Nine-Tenths, play a key role in producing students that are socially responsible students, and also has the potential to address the issues of epistemological access and decolonizing the curriculum.

Phakamani Pungu-Pungu, Nelson Mandela University (F)

The effect of politicisation of education in community building and engagement; where have we gone wrong and how do we fix our schools?

This paper examines the present state of education in South African black township schools. The position being taken by the paper seeks to outline how education has been politicised especially at schools' desk level where learner development is key. To ground the discussion, the paper looks at the relationship between higher institutions of learning and townships schools and how this very relationship

is impeded by politics. In so doing, the paper basis its discussion looking at the influences that are prohibiting the relationship between higher institutions of learning and townships schools in a way that will also bring strategies that can be used to strengthen that relationship through teachers as they serve as a bridge in this regard.

This direction is taken with a posture of ensuring that quality education is a reality through networks amongst community stakeholders, instead of schools being a battlefield for politics. In this regard, the paper employs literature as a founding model for the discussion, where the literature review functions as a vehicle for unpacking the root cause of the challenges faced by black schools. Taking this shape as a central part of the discussion, helps in demonstrating how schools have shifted from their main purpose of being beams of hope to community building through teachers that dedicate their lives in shaping the future of South Africa. Hence, placing the effects of politicisation of education in black township schools is at the core of the discussion so as to display not only the problems faced by black townships schools but most importantly, draw teachers' attention to the importance of community building as it is pivotal to their social responsibility.

Claire McCann, Rhodes University (F)

Volunteerism: nurturing academic activists, expanding the classroom

21st century challenges are complex and global in nature. Issues like climate change, deepening inequality and poverty, and global pandemics spill over from one country to the next, reflecting the interdependence of individuals and nations. Graduates, therefore, need to be equipped with the skills necessary to confront the challenges of an uncertain, interconnected world: such as social and political understanding, and a commitment to using their energies in service to the collective, based on a recognition of our social and ecological interdependence (Hamrick, 1998: 450). The economic paradigm shaping higher education, which places emphasis on the individual and the private return to education (Singh, 2001: 12), fails to nurture



these skills. Instead, a university experience embedding community engagement as part of students' learning journeys can play a role in positioning students not as clients/consumers but as active citizens (Singh, 2001: 12). While the intersection of community engagement and education is generally associated with engaged research and service learning, in this presentation, I will argue that the pillar of volunteerism holds promise in shifting economic paradigms, and equipping students to tackle complex problems. Drawing from my volunteer experience over the past five years, I aim to demonstrate that volunteerism introduces a concept of activism to students, as well as a model of citizenship combining the critical consciousness learned in the classroom with the action and reflection that comes with community practice (Bickford and Reynolds, 2002: 230). Volunteerism therefore has the potential to nurture academic activists and expand learning beyond the classroom, ultimately preparing graduates to be agents for social change.

Joyce Sewry, Akhona Ngqinambi, Ken Ngcoza, Rhodes University (F)
Attitudes to Science when doing Kitchen Chemistry at Science Clubs

Many learners seem to have a negative attitude towards science learning and science as an entity. The South African grade 9 Natural Sciences curriculum suggests the use of everyday science to introduce the usefulness and the relatability of science to learners. This study is an intervention by Rhodes University students that sought to ascertain the attitudes of grade 8 and 9 learners when they have done kitchen chemistry hands-on practical activities at science clubs in under-resourced township schools.

The learners were interviewed about their experiences, and university student volunteers at the science clubs were also interviewed. An inductive-deductive thematic approach was used to analyse the qualitative interview data.

The findings of the study revealed that there was a positive shift in the learners' attitudes after they had been engaged in the kitchen chemistry hands-on practical

activities. Additionally, the integration of everyday knowledge promoted conceptual understanding and improved the performance of the learners. The interviews with the student volunteers revealed aspects that they thought would improve attitudes to science.

This study thus recommends that hands-on kitchen chemistry hands-on practical activities be integrated into the grade 8 and 9 learners' curriculum to enrich and promote contextualized science for learners. Additionally, the integration of everyday science would promote conceptual understanding and spark learner's interest in science. Science Clubs, run by student volunteers could assist in achieving these aims.

SERVICE-LEARNING DISCUSSIONS

Thandiswa Nqowana and Gill Rennie, Rhodes University Community Engagement, Journalism Department, Rhodes University (V)

Introduction and implementation of a service learning course during a pandemic: A focus on educational journalism during a pandemic

Service learning is a form of experiential learning which refers to the weaving together of formal instruction with practical experiences that ultimately serve the community and involves both action and reflection on said action. As argued in various literature, service learning can promote a greater sense of empathy, personal identity, improve social responsibility, encourages active citizenship and thus service learning improves the student's social consciousness. These positive attributes of service learning can be used to foster a positive impact in community programs, especially during a pandemic when activities in such programmes have been halted due to national lockdowns.

This has been the case with the introduction of the service learning course in the Journalism 3rd year writing class. In the beginning of 2020, the School of Journalism and Media Studies partnered with the Vulindlela programme of the Rhodes University Community Engagement division and collaborated to offer a service



learning course for 3rd year Writing & Editing students which focuses on education journalism. In this course, students work with the Vulindlela coordinator to provide academic materials to the programme while also reporting on the programme by writing articles and blog posts.. An excellent example of this can be seen in the Vulindlela SD card project, where journalism students helped prepare and distribute learning materials to learners at no-fee paying schools during the national lockdown. The learners at the schools were able to use the material in these SD cards to learn for their exams, and the service learning students were able to use their experiences from the course to write pieces for popular consumption. These articles form part of education journalism, and help mobilise citizens and inspire action while also enforcing a more positive narrative in media during a period when education journalism coverage has been one-sided and negative. In this article we will draw on our experience in 2020-21 to focus on the implementation of this service learning course into the Vulindlela programme, as well as the impact of interactions between the students and the programme.

Heide Kuhlane, Rhodes University (F)

Service Learning Curriculum Adjustment and Adaptive Leadership Development as a Consequence of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The successful implementation and incorporation of community engagement in a university academic programme is contingent upon strategic efforts of institutions and academic departments. The responsibility extends to ensuring that while community engagement is local, it is also functional, relevant, and responsive to issues affecting the global community through relevant and responsive policy. The COVID-19 global pandemic altered many aspects of learning; service learning within community engagement was no exception. Informed by Experiential Learning Theory, this study investigated the curriculum adjustment of an Honours level service-learning course at Rhodes University and the leadership development of the lecturers who lead the course as a consequence of COVID-19. Further, the study sought to determine the responsiveness of community engagement and service-learning policies at Rhodes University at a time of crisis. The study was designed

as an interpretivist case study, employing document analysis, individual interviews, and a focus group interview. The findings revealed that, as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the service-learning course had to be adapted to ensure students' successful completion. The adaptations included attention to scaffolded learning and the re-imagining of assessment and course outcomes. The service engagement aspect of the course was lost entirely to ensure the safety of students. The study also found that the participants developed adaptive leadership competencies and skills, technological and collaboration skills as well as a heightened regard for pastoral care and social justice. Furthermore, the study revealed a need for responsive community engagement policy, and practical strategies to implement those policies. The study thus recommends an alternative service-based model approach to service-learning, increased policy responsiveness to issues posed by the 'new normal' to support adaptive leadership development through community engagement, and the re-definition of the university-community partnership through innovative and collaborative engagement.

Joana Bezerra, Rhodes University (F)

The role of service-learning in promoting citizenship - reflections from South Africa

Service-learning is a disciplinary credit-bearing course that combines academic learning with a meaningful service to a community partner and through reflection about the service, discipline specific content and real world knowledge the lessons learnt and new knowledge and perspectives are discussed and realised. Service-learning courses have potential benefits that go beyond its learning outcomes, reaching the universities and the community partners as well as community members. One of these is the impact of such courses on the personal development of students, pushing them to be more active citizens. Although the nature of citizenship is contested, some key elements can be drawn from the literature. One of them is the key role of context and sense of belonging, which gives a unique perspective to what it is to be a citizen in specific contexts. The aim of this presentation is to explore the role of service-learning in promoting citizenship in South Africa. The



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Diana Hornby & Margie Maistry, Rhodes University and Durban University of Technology (F)

Community Engagement and the Cultivation of Humanity: Repositioning the purpose of HE

Globally, the Covid 19 pandemic has highlighted the urgency to reimagine the purpose of higher education. Extreme poverty, unemployment, inequality, social unrest, destruction to infrastructure and loss of lives in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal in July are equally important impetus to question the purpose of higher education in South Africa. How do we build community, social cohesion and educate a new generation of ethical, socially just, caring and responsible leaders? How do we educate students as whole human beings and as active citizens? In popularising the notion of 'the cultivation of humanity' Martha Nussbaum (2007) argued that educating only for the knowledge economy neglected the development of abilities such as critical and creative thinking, to see oneself as a world citizen and to be socially responsible. Nussbaum associated these abilities with 'liberal education' in the humanities and the arts and argued that an education grounded in these capacities cultivates human beings and their humanity and makes the world worth living in. In this paper we propose that educating the whole student for the cultivation of humanity is a key purpose of higher education and is the responsibility of the whole university, not just the humanities and the arts. As a starting point, we advocate that community engagement provides the platform for effecting this key purpose of higher education. We adopt Archer's (1995) social realism framework of structure, culture and agency to analyse and highlight Rhodes University Community Engagement's trajectory of challenges and enablers in its attempt to 'cultivate humanity' in students, academics and communities. We demonstrate that the purpose of higher education is much more than educating students for the knowledge economy. The current global and national contexts demand the repositioning of higher education purpose to prioritise the cultivation of humanity.

Samantha Ncula, Rhodes University (V)

Oblivious to Observant

I'm sure that you have heard the expression, 'education is the key to success'. Agreed. To gain the necessary skills, knowledge, and direction, one would need to indulge in what education has to offer. Hence, the idea of being at a higher institution to further your capabilities as an individual seeking. Higher institutions often encourage students to seek and learn further towards their career choice. Through sleepless nights, early mornings and lots of coffee, students embark on their tertiary journey - an investment to one's future.

According to Chamorro-Premuzic and Frankiewicz (2019), higher education should be disrupted. As much as tertiaries and places of higher learning are great, they do tend to enforce the stigma of going to study to obtain a degree, find employment and boost economic growth. The reality is that employers are looking for skills and not just knowledge or degree titles. Students want employment and not just knowledge or degree titles. There is a common denominator between what is wanted and what is often given. It has come to the point where many tertiary places and elite universities prioritize research at the expense of teaching skills.

But what we tend to shy away from is that students have an unrealistic expectation when it comes to higher institutions and what they really have to offer for both academic and social growth. Take me for instance - young, vibrant, full of life and oblivious girl. I had this image of going to university, getting a degree, and finding work so that I can 'live my best and soft life'. But the reality is that I got to explore. I went to university, partied, and studied repeatedly. It came one faithful night when I realized my worth. I decided that day to study what I wanted and do what would make me happy - and grow. I got to embark on community engagement that not only gave me a sense of purpose in someone else's life but also gave me a holistic observation of what was happening around me. Community engagement gave me a different perspective of the reality of a qualification, as I got to develop better social, writing, and communication skills - skills apart from academia.



Lukhanyiso Cezula and Lebogang Nkambule, Rhodes University SRC (F)

The role of student volunteers in the transformative agenda of Rhodes University and the Makhanda community

Universities exist for the public good, they have a moral responsibility and are morally accountable towards the society as a whole (Cooper and Orrell, 2016; 108). Community Engagement (CE) at Rhodes University (RU) extends beyond the traditional roles of instruction and research (Hall, 2010). As a research-intensive institution, the University plays an important role in ensuring that students are not only research producers but view their communities as research contributors and collaborators. The conceptualisation of community engagement at RU is embedded in the strategic development plan Goal 1 (Maintain and strengthen our general formative degree offering and the research-teaching- community engagement nexus which enable our students to access powerful knowledge).

Students are the biggest social capital in the efforts of the University to achieve its strategic development goal. Student volunteers play a transformative role in the contextualisation of what they learn within the four walls of a lecture room into contextualising this into their lived realities of the community of Makhanda. Student volunteerism is one of the key pillars that shape the University experience of students at large, students are the social capital in the community engagement. Rather than merely being altered spaces, universities must become transformational spaces (Paphitis and Kelland, 2016; 3). The transformative process, in which students get a thorough understanding of social justice, ensures that students will go on to advocate social justice in larger society. When graduates truly understand their context, they are better able to respond to it, and we believe that this will empower them to not only fulfill their civic responsibilities, but also to actively and critically exercise their citizenship in responsible and transformative ways after they graduate. Rhodes University must achieve its mission of producing graduates who have a thorough awareness of their socio-historical and economic background, and who, as a result of this understanding, demonstrate a greater sense of civic duty in their daily lives after graduation.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT, PARENT ROLE IN EDUCATION

Mpumelelo Dywili, Rhodes University (V)

**Iingxelo zokuthatha inxaxheba kwinkqubo yeVulindlela
njengomsebenzi wedyunivesithi yaseRhodes**

Ndaqala ukwazi ngenkqubo yeVulindlela ngonyaka ka2016 apha kwidyunivesithi yase Rhodes. Le nkqubo yayiququzelelwa ngu Mrs Di Hornby esebenza kwakunye no Thobani Mesani. Enye inqubo basazisa kuyo yayi ngu-SaveAct, inkqubo yestokfele ukuzama ukuphuhlisa ukugcinwa kwemali ngaphezu kokuyisebenzisa. Lo SaveAct wenziwa ngokwamaqela ngamaqela nangoku asekhona lomaqela. Lenkqubo yathi yafumana utshintso ngo2019 yaququzelelwa nguMrs Di Hornby kwakunye noThandiswa Nqowana.

Xa ndandixelelwa ngoVulindlela zaye zabekwa iinjongo zenkqubo phambi kwam. Eyokuqala yayikukuhlanganiswa kwabazali kwimfundo yabantwana babo. Imeko yokubakho komsantsa phakathi kwabazali kwakunye nezifundo zabantwana babo kwiminyaka yokufunda kwam indenze ukuba ndifune ukuba yinxalenye kaVulindlela. iVulindlela yawutsala umdla wam. Ndabona kuAnesipho obechophele iimviwo zakhe zika Grade 12 othe waphumelela ngeDiploma koyena nyaka wakhe wanzima kwezemfundo, unyaka apho besiphakathi ko bhubhane weCorona, othe wayenzanzima kakhulu imeko yokufunda.

Kulenkcazelo ndizakube ndityatyadula, ndicacisa ngeendlela iinkqubo zabazali ezifana noVulindlela ezithi zisincendise njengabazali ekunikeni inkxaso kubantwana bethu ezifundweni zabo. Ndizakube ndinika iingxelo malunga namava am kwenye imisebenzi esithe sayenza kulenkqubo kuleminyana mithandathu ukusukela kunyaka ka2016 ukuya koka2021. Nanjalo ndiphinde ndikhankanye iziphumo neempembelelo zongenelelo lweenkqubo ezithe zabandakanya abantwana bethu kuVulindlela, ezifana neezifundo zangemigqibelo kwakunye nokunikezelwa kwamakhadi ekuthiwa ziSD cards anezinto zokufunda kuwo. Ngokwenjenje, ithemba lam kukubonisa ukubaluleka kwezinkqubo ukuze abantu jikelele, abathathi



bezigqibo kunye neenkokheli zomgaqo siseko zibone ukubaluleka kochongwa nokuxhaswa kwezinkqubo.

Nicci Hayes, Nikki Green, Boniwe Msimango, Nolly Shelle and Vatiswa Joni (F)

Re-kindling parents' engagement in education

Given the uncertainties of a post pandemic future, one of the few certainties is that there is merit in empowering parents to rediscover and embrace their vital and profound role in the education and educational support of their children. Learning losses (estimated in the recent NIDS-CRAM wave 5 report as a full year in quintile one to three schools) have affected young children worse than others. Grade 2s in the Eastern Cape are just not learning to read according to a Funda Wanda analysis of 150 intervention schools. However, supportive parents can mitigate against these losses, and we have seen parent-child relationships rekindled at this time through our Mikhulu Trust Booksharing programme. This technique enables parents, regardless of their own reading strengths, to engage with their children using wordless books. Using narrative analysis we have collected heart-warming stories of potentially long-term relationships change reported by parents all brought about by implementing a simple, short, daily routine of booksharing, and by unlearning what we supposedly can't do.

Dr Margie Childs (V)

Wordless Picturebooks in action: An adventure connecting home, school and university

The reading and interpretation of wordless picture books (WPBs) is a creative undertaking in which participants engage with images and narratives informed by their experiences and background. Children and adults can view and then share the story that emerges from the pages. This presentation looks at the beginnings of a literacy adventure taking place in the homes of five Intermediate Phase learners. The literacy project takes place in one of the oldest township areas of Gqeberha (Port

Elizabeth). Participating families live in the community surrounding an innovative primary school. Due to Covid-19 realities, group engagement and interaction are limited. Children are assisted to share the stories they create with one another via WhatsApp voice notes. The oral sharing of stories, prompted by WPBs, paves the way for creating and writing new stories. To intensify the understanding of the elements of a story, children are provided with a creative writing workbook. They are encouraged to use this resource with the guidance of their parents to improve their story creation skills. These narrative skills are employed to create new stories. Emerging insights suggest that reading WPBs and creating new stories has benefits both for the children and their parents. More substantial literate identities seem to be appearing. Ripple effects of positive literacy encounters are apparent as children share their literacy exploits with peers. Another important ripple is the way insights from the project are being used to augment and rethink literacy practices to support pre-service teacher education students. Community based wordless picture book work is being used to challenge the dominance of print based literacy in the curriculum. The possibilities and promise of visual approaches within literacy methodology courses at higher education institutions may be reimagined as a result of understandings coalescing from this initiative with learners and their families.



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