

2023



BLENDED SYMPOSIUM

Rhodes University Community Engagement,
Makhanda, South Africa



The Significance, Relevance and Impact of Higher Education Community Engagement for South Africa and the Continent

Community Engagement (CE) is not a novel concept for the African context. CE is a change impetus in the higher education arena and because change is not readily welcomed or accepted in many organisations, CE is yet to be fully established by a number of universities in South Africa and the continent. While some valid reasons exist for this slow pace such as the lack of funding and lack of a legal framework from a national level, we believe that much can be done to establish CE despite these and other existing challenges. By promoting the developmental and transformative roles of universities, CE serves as a platform to build community-university relationships for the mutual benefit of all those involved in CE, such as students, communities and academics. Many societal problems grow out of the belief and consequent practice that human and social phenomena can be perceived and addressed in an isolated and fragmented manner (particularly in South Africa where fragmentation, segregation and division remain a way of life). Issues of the community are multi-faceted and, as such, may be addressed in a coordinated, multidimensional way through strong community-university partnerships, and CE has the potential to build these partnerships through the forms of Community Based Service Learning (CBSL), Engaged Research (ER) and Engaged Citizenry, among others.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this symposium is to understand and highlight the significance, relevance and impact of higher education community engagement for South Africa and the rest of Africa. Given that formalised CE is relatively new in the higher education arena, is still emerging as a discipline and confrontation with resistance by some academics is still prevalent, the objective of the symposium is to generate knowledge, both theoretical and practical, on the significance, relevance and impact of CE for higher education and its reimagined purposes

THEMES

(PLEASE REFER TO SYMPOSIUM WEBSITE FOR THE VARIOUS SUB-THEMES)

Theme 1: Engaged Teaching through Community Based Service Learning

This theme focuses on a transformative pedagogy that links academic classroom learning to a service in the community through the formation of mutually beneficial community-university partnerships that address complex community needs and also produce engaged and socially responsible graduates.

Theme 2: Engaged Research which includes Community Based Participatory Research

This theme focuses on research that is responsive to societal challenges using collaborative research approaches that include Community Based Participatory Research

Theme 3: Engaged Citizenry through student volunteerism and community-university partnerships

Theme 3 focuses on the importance of engaged citizenry opportunities in students' university experiences.

Theme 4: Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship

This theme focuses on the role of universities in contributing to economic development of communities by developing innovative strategies to holistically and collaboratively address social issues.

Key Questions

All of the above themes and sub-themes should attempt to critically answer the following key questions of the symposium:

1. What is the significance of CE for higher education?
2. How can CE contribute to the reimagined purposes of higher education?
3. What is the relevance of CE for higher education and the various participants of CE?
4. What is the impact of CE regarding community development and university transformation?
5. What are the challenges for the establishment of CE and how can these challenges be addressed?

Presentation Formats

Research Papers

Posters

Storytelling

Workshops

Any other format is accepted. Please explain in your abstract

Language: English. However, presentations in all languages are accepted but translation is the responsibility of the presenter.

Abstract format: title, name of contributors, presentation format (power point, poster, workshop, etc.), a summary of your presentation (300 words Max)

Abstract Deadline: 24 March 2023

Submit abstracts here: <https://bit.ly/rucesymposiumabstractcall>

Symposium website: <https://bit.ly/3Hzpejo>

Symposium Fees: Face to face: R2,200.00 for University Staff and R1,200.00 for Students and Partners (includes conference pack, teas, lunches, refreshments and dinner).

Bursaries are available for all students and Rhodes Staff.

Contact **046 603 7229** for more information.

Virtual: R500.00 for University Staff and R250.00 for Students and Partners.

Roundtable Sessions

Roundtable sessions (free of charge) are offered on Monday 8 May 2023. More information about the sessions will be available on the registration form.

- Community Engagement - University Social Responsibility - Monday 8 May (Afternoon session)
- Digital Storytelling - Monday 8 May (Afternoon session)

Publication

Research papers will be selected from the presentations for the first publication of the **African Journal of Higher Education Community Engagement (AJHECE)** in 2023. This new journal intends to make a significant contribution not only to embedding community engagement in university functions but also to growing an African canon on community engagement, and moving towards knowledge democracy.

Contact Persons:

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