TEFCE TOOLBOX FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: WHY, HOW AND FOR WHOM?

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1. ABOUT THE TEFCE PROJECT
ABOUT THE TEFCE PROJECT

• Project: *Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education (TEFCE).*

• Funding: Erasmus+, Key Action 3, Forward Looking Cooperation projects (FLCPs) (01.2018-12.2020).

• Objective: Develop innovative policy tools at the university and European level for supporting, monitoring and assessing the community engagement of universities.
2. POLICY BACKGROUND
Community engagement is an integral part of universities’ ‘third mission’ activities, but it has so far been marginalised:

- Most third mission policies have focused on the economic significance and impact of universities, e.g.: innovation, entrepreneurship, business cooperation, labour market relevance.
- There is a need to rebalance the societal contributions of universities, by promoting community engagement of universities.
The role of higher education in responding to societal challenges is re-emerging as a policy priority in many countries and at the transnational level.

- E.g. EU Renewed Agenda for Higher Education; EU’s Horizon 2020 ‘Science with and for Society’; European Universities Initiative; ...
- E.g. UN Sustainable Development Goals
- E.g. Policy frameworks in for engagement and impact in UK and Ireland
3. DEFINITIONS
Community engagement is about how universities address societal needs in partnership with their external communities.

- **Community**: ‘communities of place, identity or interest’, thus including government, business, civil society organisations and citizens, from the local to the global level.

- **Engagement**: process whereby universities undertake joint activities with external communities in a way that is mutually beneficial, even if each side benefits in a different way.

- **Societal needs**: political, economic, cultural, social, technological and environmental factors that can influence quality of life in society.
4. ‘MEASURING’ THE COMMUNITY-ENGAGED UNIVERSITY
MEASUREMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Typical measurement and assessment tools

Guidelines
Standards
Indicators
Targets

Accrediting
Auditing
Benchmarking
Evaluating
MEASUREMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Typical measurement and assessment tools

- Guidelines
- Standards
- Indicators
- Targets
- Accrediting
- Auditing
- Benchmarking
- Evaluating
- Ranking
The TEFCE approach:

- Dropping the search for the perfect quantitative indicators of community engagement, and opting for a qualitative approach

- Rejecting the logic of ranking and competitive benchmarking and accepting that community engagement is always multifaceted and context-specific

- Avoiding a bureaucratic self-assessment process, and instead encouraging a participative process

- Learning from previous tools, but proposing a new approach ...
OTHER EXISTING TOOLS AND INITIATIVES

- Carnegie Foundation Elective Community Engagement Classification
- The Talloires Network
- GLOBAL UNIVERSITY NETWORK FOR INNOVATION
- National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement
- CampusEngage
- UNESCO
- uniTwin
- University of Victoria
- Knowledge, Research, Innovation, and Access
- UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education
- AUCEA
5. THE TEFCE TOOLBOX
To serve as a reference tool for universities, communities and policymakers to better understand the dimensions of community engagement in higher education

To serve as a practical tool for universities to determine how well they perform according to each dimension, as well as where they can improve.
The TEFCE Toolbox is the result of a co-creation process involving over 170 participants from eight countries over 18 months.

The TEFCE Toolbox ‘prototype’ and method was developed by five international experts (Farnell, Benneworth, Ćulum Ilić, Seeber, Šćukanec Schmidt), based on their previous TEFCE study on community engagement (Benneworth et al., 2018).

The final version of the TEFCE Toolbox is the result of collecting practices from over 120 practitioners and discussions between 50 experts and representatives of universities and their communities during piloting visits at four higher education institutions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Authenticity of engagement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Empowerment of individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participative steering (combining bottom-up and top-down approaches)</td>
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<td>4. Learning journey rather than benchmarking</td>
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TEFCE TOOLBOX: 4 TOOLS

Tool 1: Dimensions of community engagement

Tool 2: Levels of community engagement

Tool 3: Institutional community-engagement heatmap

Tool 4: Self-reflective ‘SLIPDOT analysis’
## TOOL 1: DIMENSIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Teaching and learning</th>
<th>Study programmes reflecting societal needs; community-based learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. Research</td>
<td>Research carried out about and with external communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Service and knowledge exchange</td>
<td>Academic staff supporting external communities’ development and empowerment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Students</td>
<td>Students leading their own projects and initiatives with external communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Management (partnerships and openness)</td>
<td>University establishing partnerships with external communities and providing them with access to facilities and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Management (policies, support structures)</td>
<td>University management reflecting its commitment to community engagement in policies and institutional support structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Supportive peers</td>
<td>Academic and professional staff actively supporting community engagement.</td>
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TOOL 2: LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

*Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>benefits students to develop their knowledge and skills, although there is little evidence yet of their outcomes for the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>has demonstrated benefits for students and supports community partners in addressing a short-term problem or need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>builds capacities of community partners and bring equal benefits to the students, teaching staff and university as a whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Synthesising results of entire process by considering the following characteristics (for all the examined dimensions)...

- Extent of **authenticity** of engagement
- Type of **societal needs** addressed through community engagement
- Types of **communities engaged with**
- Extent to which engagement is **embedded/widespread** at institution
- Extent to which is is continuous and **sustainable**

...Using a colour scale
TOOL 3: INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL HEATMAP

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**LOWER LEVELS**

1. Authenticity of engagement
   - superficial engagement, no evidence yet of mutual benefit

2. Societal needs addressed
   - needs of labour market and industry

3. Communities engaged with
   - well-resourced institutions (business, government)

4. Institutional spread
   - engagement practices only present at one or two university departments

5. Institutional sustainability
   - engagement through short-term projects

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**HIGHER LEVELS**

1. Authentic engagement, with tangible benefits for communities

2. Global ‘grand challenges’ (e.g., climate change) or local social needs

3. Low-resource partners (schools, NGOs, social enterprises, citizens)

4. Engagement practices that take place across the entire institution

5. Engagement that has been institutionalised, with adequate funding
TOOL 3: INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL HEATMAP

Illustrative example: University X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Authenticity</th>
<th>Societal needs addressed</th>
<th>Communities engaged with</th>
<th>Embedded</th>
<th>Sustainable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Teaching and learning</td>
<td>lowest</td>
<td>highest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Research</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Service/knowledge exchange</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V. University management (partnerships)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
TOOL 4: ‘SLIPDOT’ ANALYSIS

Areas of Strength

Areas of Lower Intensity

Areas with Potential for Development

Opportunities

Threats
TEFCE TOOLBOX IN PRACTICE

Stage 1: Quick scan

Stage 2: Evidence-collection / Dimensions

Stage 3: Heatmap

Stage 4: Tool 4: 'SLIPDOT' analysis

Stage 5: Self-reflection

Month 1: Quick scan
Month 2: Evidence-collection / Dimensions
Month 3: Heatmap
Month 4: Tool 4: 'SLIPDOT' analysis
Month 5: Self-reflection
Month 6: Institutional report
BENEFITS OF TEFCE TOOLBOX

• **Demonstrating the value** that the university brings to communities, as well as the value that community engagement brings to university.

• Supporting intrinsic motivation of community-engaged staff, students and external partners by **recognising and showcasing good practices**.

• **Basis for planning improvements** to the universities’ mutually beneficial community engagement activities.
POTENTIAL OF TEFCE TOOLBOX

• The TEFCE Toolbox can be implemented in different institutional and local contexts.

• It thus has the potential to become a robust tool that will support European universities in institutionalising their cooperation with the wider community... and is therefore a potential European framework for community engagement in higher education.
See our first publication and policy brief: www.tefce.eu
Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/TEFCEProject
POST-SCRIPTUM
In memoriam: Paul Benneworth (1974-2020)

Paul was one of the leading experts worldwide on community engagement in higher education and played a central role in the TEFCE project and in the development of the TEFCE Toolbox.
Thank you for your attention!