

Building capacities of the next generation of community-based participatory researchers

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Experiences from Europe

*Cristina Escrigas,
Advisor*

Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi),



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www.guninetwork.org

- European universities have the urgent challenge to improve their current community engagement performance.
- University work in engagement occurs against a range of competing forces.
- Universities have to make strategic choices and are being overloaded with several mission.
- CUE in Europe is still at an early, peripheral phase, and the central challenge is in placing it at the heart of university life.

Community-university engagement trends in Europe

- From the 1980s, European HE was increasingly move to a **new managerial autonomy** to improve public spending's productivity and efficiency.
- This affected university-societal relationships **framing universities' activities' value in economic terms.**
- National HE systems face **European Union pressure to prioritise reforming teaching and research through the Bologna processes.**
- As a consequence, societal engagement is increasingly managed mostly under the **'third mission' umbrella.**

Community-university engagement trends in Europe

- **Public engagement activities with income-generation potential (primarily business engagement) has become more important, marginalising other engagement activity.**
- **Only one element of “community”: business communities, have been embraced and normalised by universities.**
- **Societal engagement today remains implicitly important to universities.**

Community-university engagement trends in Europe

- There is a **variety of institutional approaches** to community engagement; The projects and practices are **very diverse**.
- Public engagement is an **adjunct activity** to universities' core activities, within the 'development periphery'.
- There are **few incentives** on universities to institutionalise engagement.
- The picture is of **much activity, but greatly fragmented** without overall institutional co-ordination.
- The sector is **incredibly innovative**.

**Institutional structures supporting
community-engagement**

- **Community-University Engagement is much less prescribed by statute than teaching and research activities.**
- **Engagement is a choice rather than a compulsion, and that choice is often linked to the synergy that engagement has with traditional missions of teaching a research.**

**Regulatory frameworks encouraging
university-community engagement**

Risk and tensions:

- In **Europe's increasingly individualised and consumerist society**, these signals risk being lost against the noise of markets, league-tables, rankings and competition.
- **Confusing a general duty to support socio-economic development** with a more self-interested reading that CUE should directly benefit the university.
- The increasing dominance in Europe of the **technological innovation imperative**, a belief that as economic development depends on this kind of innovation, has prioritized public expenditure to drive it.

Risk and tensions to advance CUE

- A concept of **scientific knowledge is highly valued.**
- The dominant culture of higher education **values individualism and competition.**
- HE is **losing its capacity to be critical** and advance ways of thinking going further their immediate mandate.
- Societal engagement either **remains voluntary** or has become **increasingly relegated.**

Risk and tensions to advance CUE

- » In the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden universities are required by law to interact with society, but without funding.
- » In the UK there is no formal legal duty for universities engagement, but substantial funding has been allocated for their engagement plans. (Manchester, Birmingham, National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement are some examples).
- » France has both issues: strong duties on universities to engage as well as the relevant resources to deliver that engagement.

Community-University Experiences

- **Internal organizational and structure changes.**
 - » New high-level positions responsible for coordinating and supporting university civic engagement.
 - » Faculty assessment, advancement policies and specific structures to give greater weight to the quality and the impacts of CUE in teaching and research.
- **To reframe civic engagement as a route to high quality teaching and research.**
 - » Measuring and documenting CUE impact in teaching and research and expand these results.
 - » Create recognition systems for acknowledge CUE practices.
 - » Developing trainings and guidelines to support adapting curricula, to foster awareness, know-how, expertise and competence of CUE;
 - » Including CUE criteria in the evaluation and assessment of research staff.

**Strategies and actions to advance
community engagement**

- **The some evaluation systems** in higher education now recognize and reward university civic engagement.
 - » Some global ranking added civic engagement as a new criterion.
 - » There is increased evidence that engaged teaching and research is an effective pathway to higher quality teaching and research.

- **Participate in, and contribute to,** the HE engagement movement.
 - » Incentivizing national and regional networks
 - » These coalitions are primary vehicles for exchange of experience, capacity-building, and collective voice in policy advocacy.

**Strategies and actions to advance
community engagement**

- Efforts must be placed in bringing together the **complementarity of the diverse ways of engagement**.
 - » One main fact is the **disconnection between the existing typologies of CUE**.
- **Connect institutional goals** with the global development agenda post 2015.
 - » Civic engagement programs contribute positively to advancing in the several **pressing global challengers**.
- **Develop and expand new sources of funding**.
 - » Encourage public and private funders to understand that university civic engagement programs are a promising investment opportunity.

Strategies and actions to advance community engagement



GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
NETWORK FOR INNOVATION

GUNiSecretariat

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
C. Jordi Girona 31
Edifici TG (S-1)
E- 08034 - Barcelona (Spain)

☎ +34 93.401.70.09
✉ Fax +34 93.401.08.55
info@guninetwork.org
www.guninetwork.org



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• Global University Network for Innovation

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)

The Rome Declaration, November 2014

We call on European Institutions, EU Member States and their R&I Funding and Performing Organisations, business and civil society to make Responsible Research and Innovation a central objective across all relevant policies and activities, including in shaping the European Research Area and the Innovation Union.

Strategies and actions to advance engagement in Europe

Responsible Research and Innovation

- We call on European Institutions, Member States, Regional Authorities and Research and Innovation Funding Organisations to:
- Build capacity for RRI by:
 - ~ Promoting and funding RRI activities at the national, regional and local level;
 - ~ Networking existing initiatives that support RRI knowhow, expertise and competence, within and between EU Member States and between sectors;
 - ~ Supporting global RRI initiatives in view of the global nature of our grand challenges.

Strategies and actions to advance engagement in Europe

Responsible Research and Innovation

- Review and adapt metrics and narratives for research and innovation by:
 - ~ Monitoring the RRI performance of Research and Innovation Funding and
 - ~ Performing Organisations and socio-economic impacts;
 - ~ Providing guidelines for the implementation and assessment of RRI;
 - ~ Setting and communicating a forward looking vision of RRI.

Strategies and actions to advance engagement in Europe

Responsible Research and Innovation

- Implement institutional changes that foster RRI by:
 - ~ Reviewing their own procedures and practices in order to identify possible RRI barriers and opportunities at organisation level;
 - ~ Creating experimental spaces to engage civil society actors in the research process as sources of knowledge and partners in innovation;
 - ~ Developing and implementing strategies and guidelines for the acknowledgment and promotion of RRI;
 - ~ Adapting curricula and developing trainings to foster awareness, know-how, expertise and competence of RRI;
 - ~ Including RRI criteria in the evaluation and assessment of research staff.

Strategies and actions to advance engagement in Europe

- Contrary to what is sometimes claimed, it is not enough for university leaders to simply declare that ‘engagement matters’.
- This transformation process is a journey, from superficial engagement to engagement lying at the heart of universities’ essence.
- Only if European governments (and the European Commission) prioritise community engagement will it ever become significant for universities.
- Governments need to drive universities to better engage, and Universities should be vocal in demanding this from them.

Strategies and actions to advance CUE in Europe

The net results of these shifts have been that societal engagement either remains voluntary (in those systems which retain a high degree of academic autonomy) or has become increasingly relegated (in those systems in which there has been a shift to managerial autonomy).

Community-university engagement trends in Europe