



TEFCE

**Towards a European Framework for
Community Engagement in Higher Education**

PROJECT FUNDING

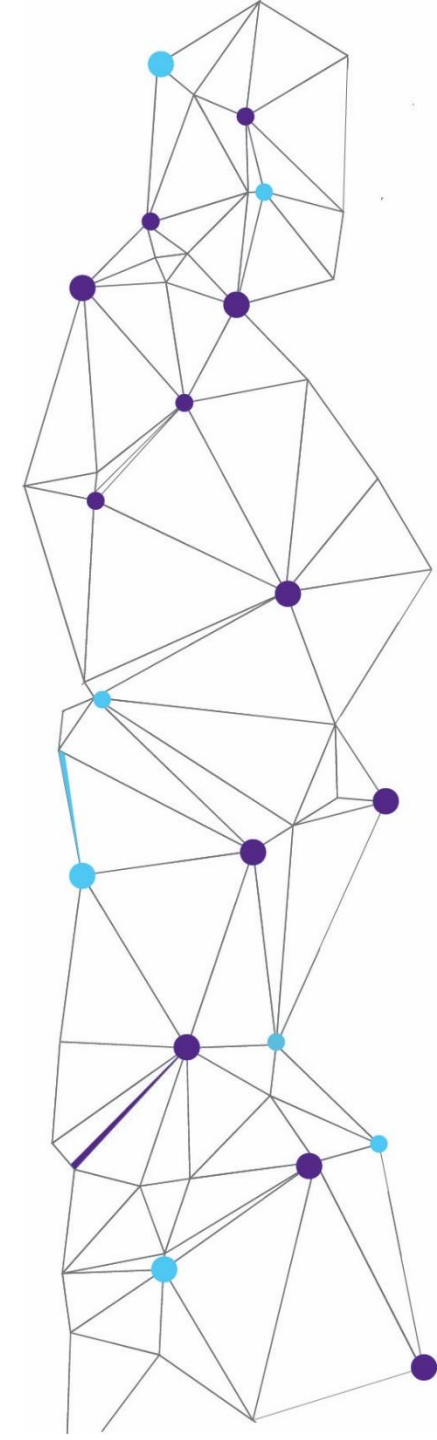


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PROJECT CO-FINANCING



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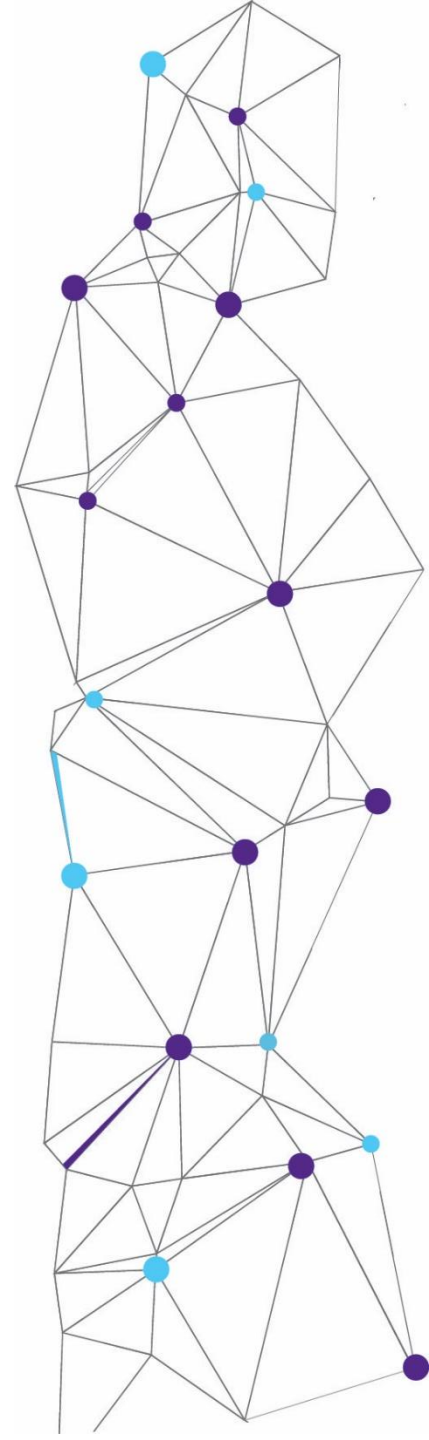


COULD WE CREATE A EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

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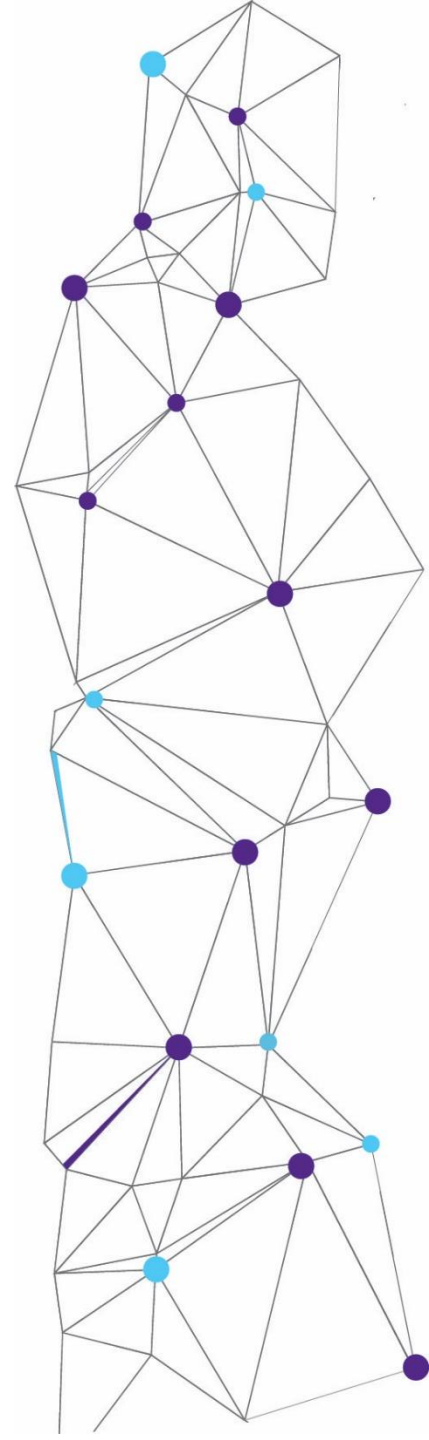
#EQAF2019

Berlin, 22.11.2019.



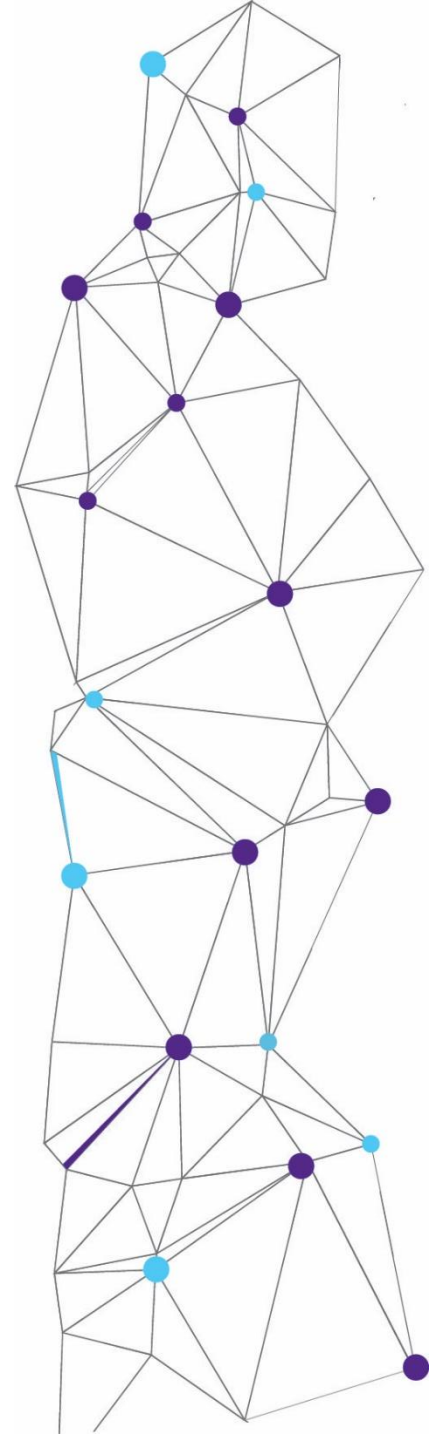
OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

1. Introduction
2. **Background:** the third mission of HE
3. **Definitions:** ‘community’; ‘engagement’
4. **Challenges:** why community engagement is not on agenda
5. **Measuring community engagement:** dos and don'ts!
6. **Towards a European framework for community engagement**



1. INTRODUCTION

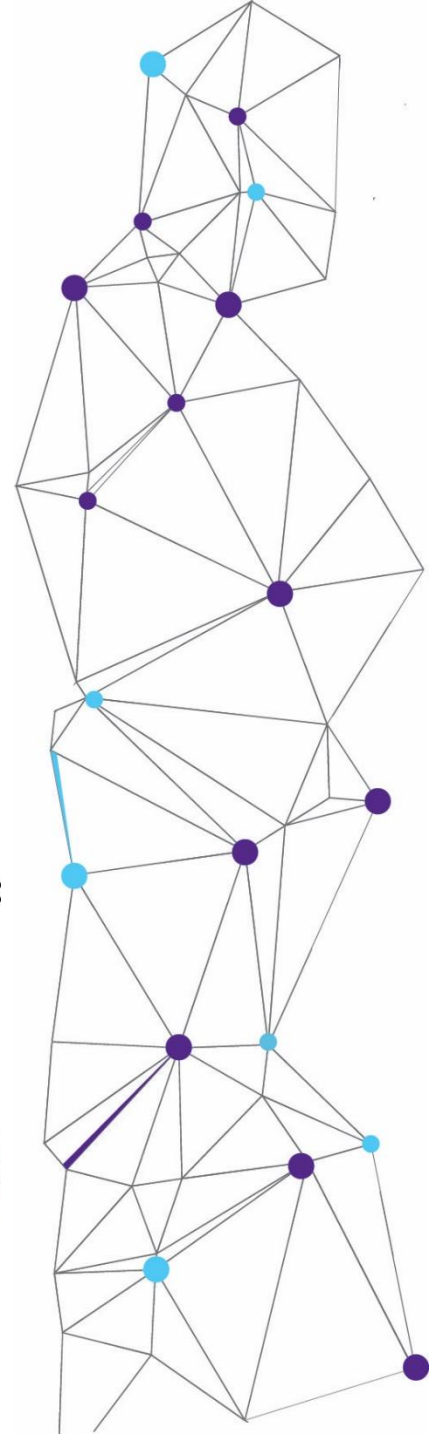
- The paper was developed as part of the project *Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education (TEFCE)*.
- Funding: Erasmus+, Key Action 3, Forward Looking Cooperation projects (FLCPs) (01.2018-12.2020).
- Objective: Develop innovative policy tools at the university and European level for supporting, monitoring and assessing the community engagement of universities.



PROJECT COORDINATORS



PROJECT CONSORTIUM



1. INTRODUCTION

Paper presents the conclusions of the TEFCE project publication

Mapping and Critical Synthesis of Current State-of-the-Art on Community Engagement in Higher Education (2018)

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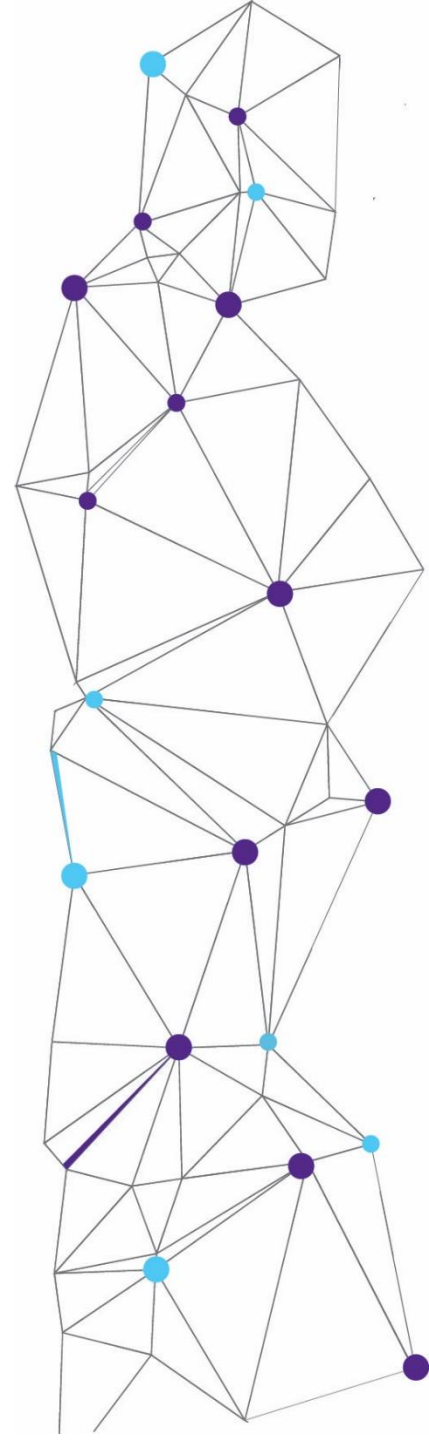
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MAPPING AND CRITICAL SYNTHESIS OF CURRENT STATE-OF-THE-ART ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Paul Bennenworth, Bojana Culum, Thomas Farnell, Frans Kaiser,
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PROJECT FUNDING



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POLICY BRIEF

A European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education: Why and How?

KEY MESSAGES

- Community engagement is emerging as a policy priority in higher education, reflecting increasing pressure on universities to demonstrate how they deliver public benefits.
- Community engagement is about mutually beneficial cooperation between universities and their wider communities, with an emphasis on communities with fewer resources.
- Universities are under pressure to address other priorities such as research excellence and technology transfer, leaving little incentive to pursue community engagement.
- Community engagement is difficult to manage and measure, due to its range of activities and stakeholders.
- With the (re)emergence of the community engagement agenda, there is a need to develop a framework for community engagement in higher education to support universities in institutionalising their cooperation with the wider community and to inform policy-makers on the value of such engagement.
- Although accountability tools in higher education have so far focused on competitive comparisons of performance through quantitative indicators, there is gradual move away from such tools.
- The new framework that will be developed through the TEFCE project will acknowledge the complexity of community engagement and the diversity of university-community contexts. It will foster a learning journey for universities towards transformational forms of engagement, rather than being a measurement and ranking exercise.

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy brief presents the conclusions of the publication *Mapping and Critical Synthesis of Current State-of-the-Art on Community Engagement in Higher Education*, by Paul Bennenworth, Bojana Culum, Thomas Farnell, Frans Kaiser, Marco Seeber, Ninoslav Šćukanec, Schmidt, Hans Vossensteyn and Don Westerheijden. The publication is issued as a part of the TEFCE project, whose objective is to develop innovative policy tools for supporting, monitoring and assessing the community engagement of universities.

2. BACKGROUND

Community engagement has emerged as a priority in the European Commission's Renewed Agenda for Higher Education. While actions that link the university with broader society are not a novelty, community engagement in higher education is a new way of articulating and structuring how higher education interacts with the wider world.¹ The Commission's Renewed Agenda emphasises that 'higher education must play its part in facing up to Europe's social and democratic challenges' and should engage 'by integrating local, regional and societal issues into curricula, involving the local community in teaching and research projects, providing adult learning and communicating and building links with local communities.'²

Universities are under increasing pressure to demonstrate how they deliver public benefits. The increased emphasis on community engagement in higher education can also be understood as a critical response to the predominance of university engagement with business.³ Additionally, with the dominance of research excellence as a priority in higher education, many universities have failed to develop infrastructures to translate the knowledge they produce into tangible benefits for the wider community.

PROJECT FUNDING



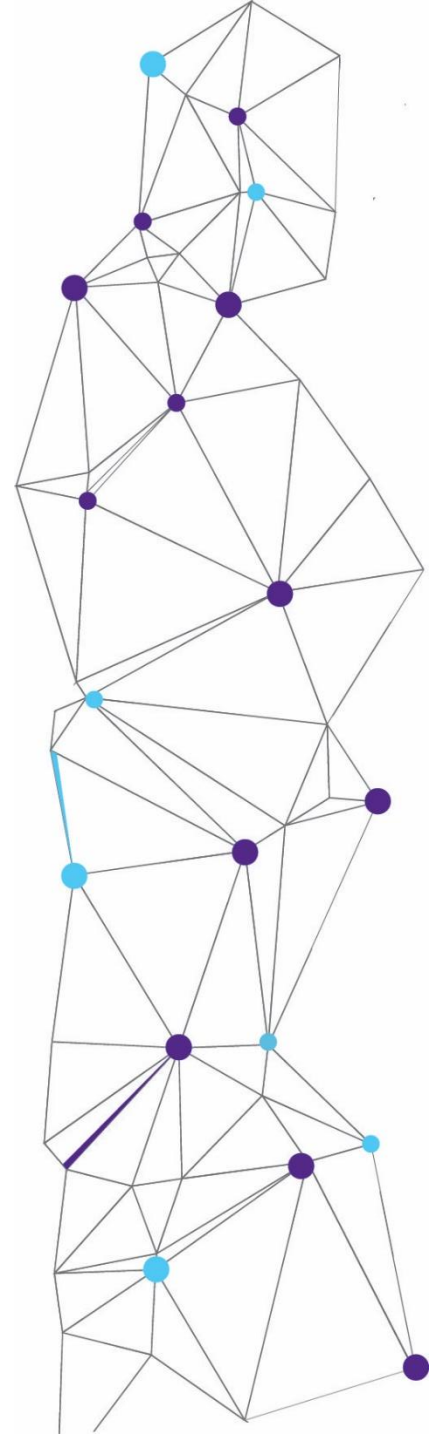
PROJECT CO-FINANCING



2. BACKGROUND

Community engagement is an integral part of universities' 'third mission' activities, but it has so far been marginalised:

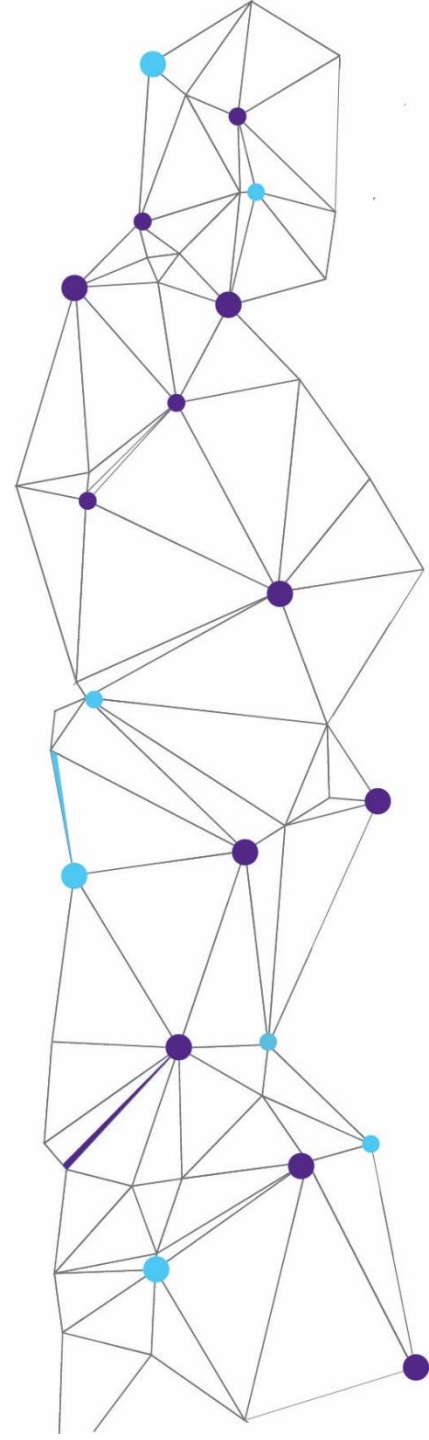
- Most third mission policies have focused on the **economic significance and impact** of universities, e.g.: innovation, entrepreneurship, business cooperation, labour market relevance.
- There is a need to **rebalance the societal contributions** of universities, by promoting *community engagement* of universities.



2. BACKGROUND

Community engagement has emerged as a priority in the European Commission's *Renewed Agenda for Higher Education*:

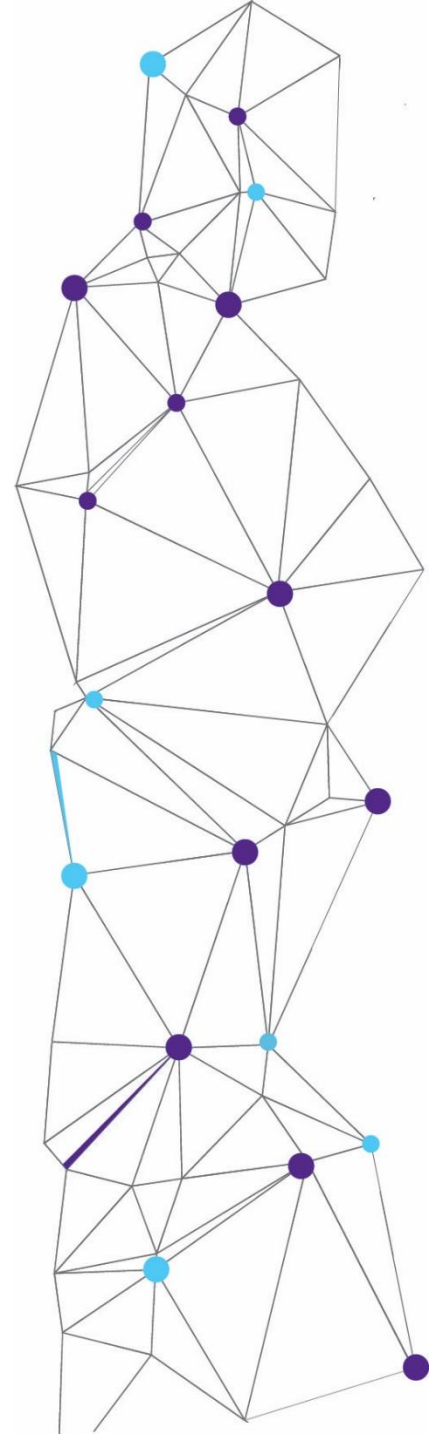
- '[...] higher education must play its part in facing up to Europe's social and democratic challenges [...]
- Higher education should engage
 - '[...] by integrating local, regional and societal issues into curricula,
 - involving the local community in teaching and research projects,
 - providing adult learning and
 - communicating and building links with local communities [...]



3. DEFINITIONS

i. 'Community engagement'

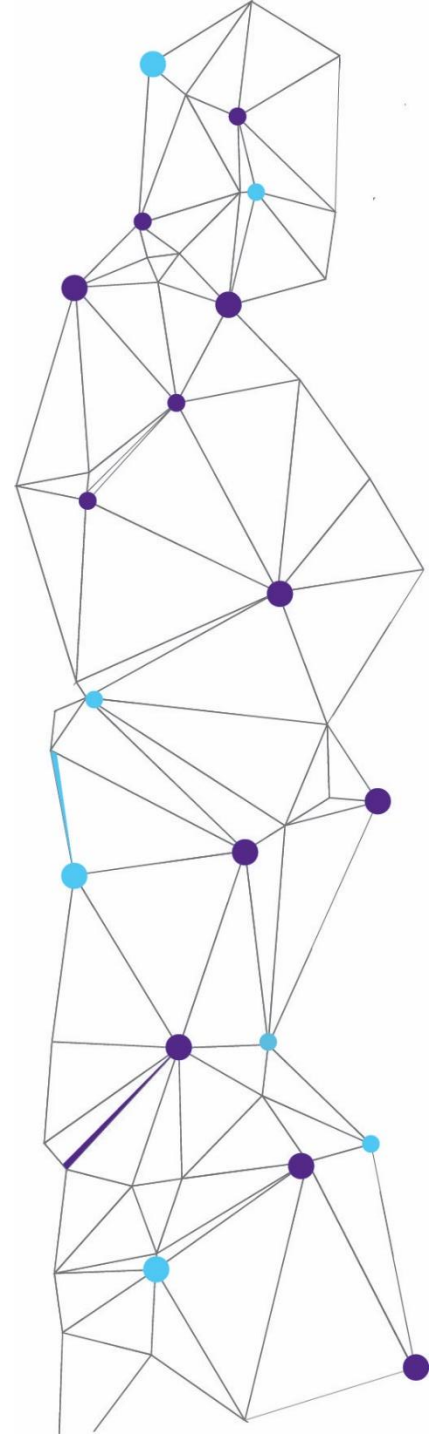
- Universities developing relationships with their wider communities in order to address societal needs, in a way that is **mutually beneficial**...
- ... (even though each side may benefit in a different way)...
- ... and with an emphasis on those communities with fewer resources.



3. DEFINITIONS

ii. 'Community'

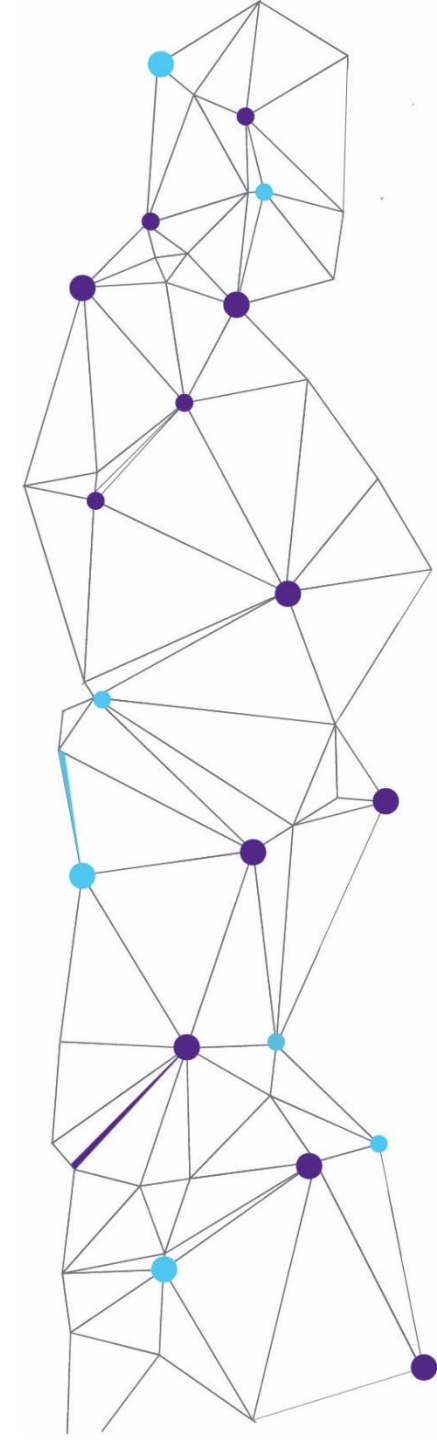
- Communities of place, identity or interest: includes government, business and civil society and general population ...
- ... but with special emphasis on **harder to reach groups** (e.g. NGOs, social enterprises, cultural organisations, schools, local governments, citizens).
- Also, the community does not necessarily need to be **local** - community engagement can also have **regional, national and international dimensions**.



3. DEFINITIONS

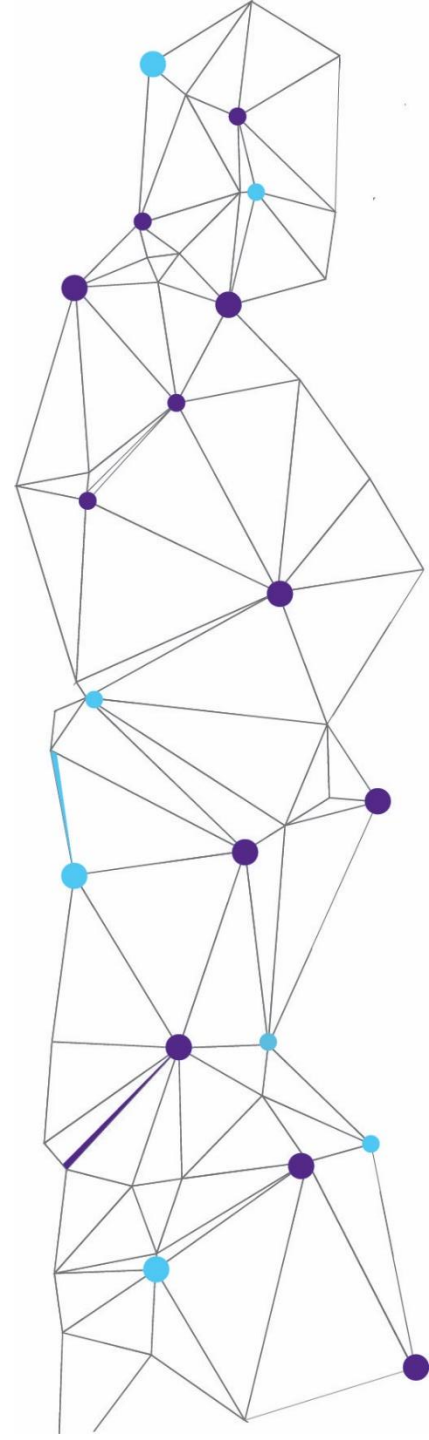
iii. Community Engagement (with illustrative examples)

| Teaching | Research | Service/knowledge exchange | Students | University management / governance |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Community-based learning</p> <p>Service-learning</p> <p>Project-based learning</p> <p>etc.</p> | <p>Research <i>about</i> the community</p> <p>Research <i>with</i> the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participatory research - action research - participatory research - citizen science | <p>‘Science shops’</p> <p>Capacity-building for community groups</p> <p>Academic staff involvement in public (policy) debates</p> <p>etc.</p> | <p>Student volunteering</p> <p>Student activism</p> <p>etc.</p> | <p>Open access to university resources and facilities</p> <p>Community represented in university committees</p> <p>etc.</p> |



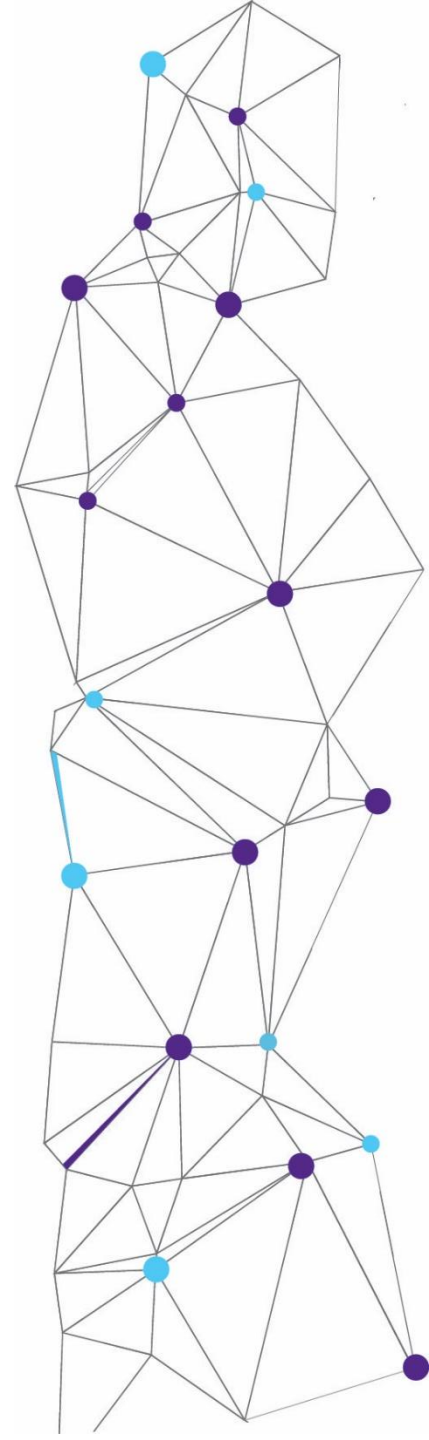
3. DEFINITIONS: link with quality enhancement

- Increased level of community engagement >>> **improved quality** of educational outcomes – BUT – do we need?:
 - Link to the ESG?
 - Should external quality enhancement mechanisms assess how the community engagement is considered by internal quality enhancement systems at universities?
 - Should universities create institutional policies, services and organizational structures that will continuously support community engagement?



4. CHALLENGES

- Policy priorities in higher education focus on **excellence and global league tables** and do not encourage community engagement.
- **Competing priorities *within* universities' third mission** make difficult to institutionalise community engagement (compared to technology transfer, commercialisation of research, entrepreneurship, etc).
- **What measures counts ...** and community engagement is resistant to being measured.



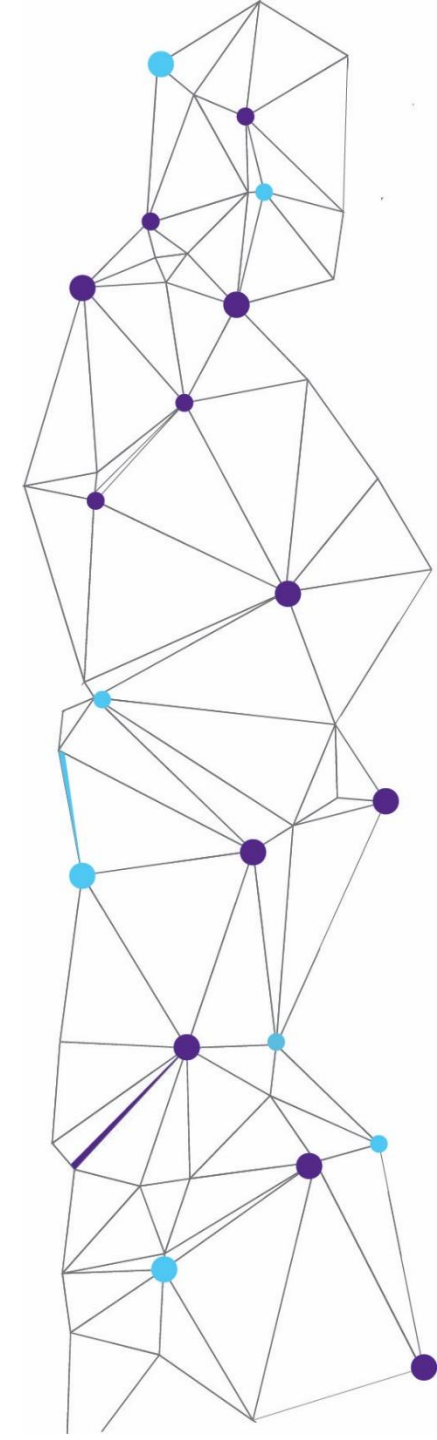
5. 'MEASURING' COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Typical measurement and assessment tools



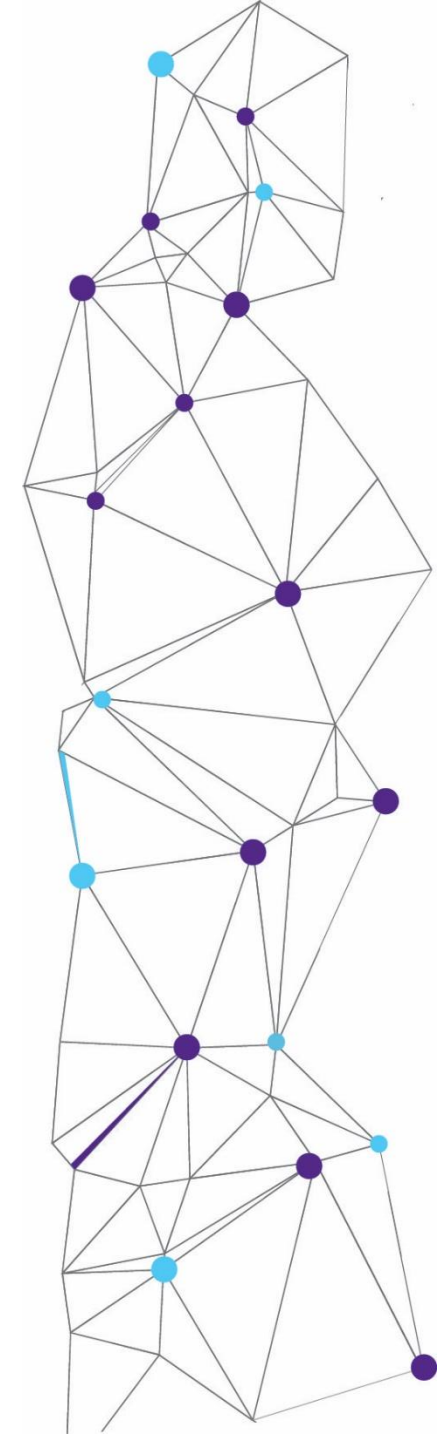
Guidelines
Standards
Indicators
Targets

Accrediting
Auditing
Benchmarking
Evaluating
Ranking



5. 'MEASURING' COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

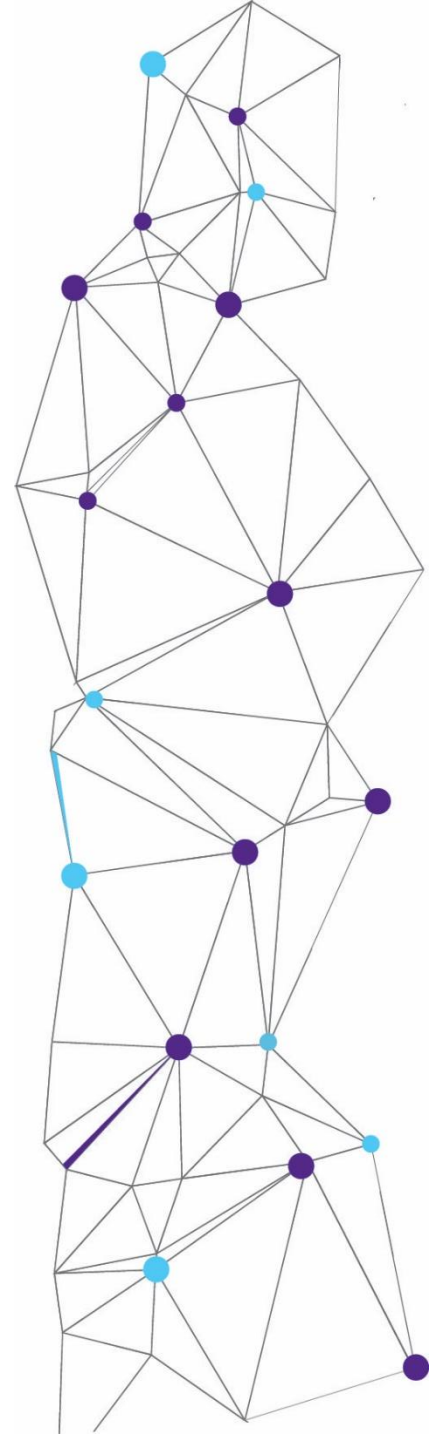
Typical measurement and assessment tools



5. 'MEASURING' COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Problems with typical measurement approaches:

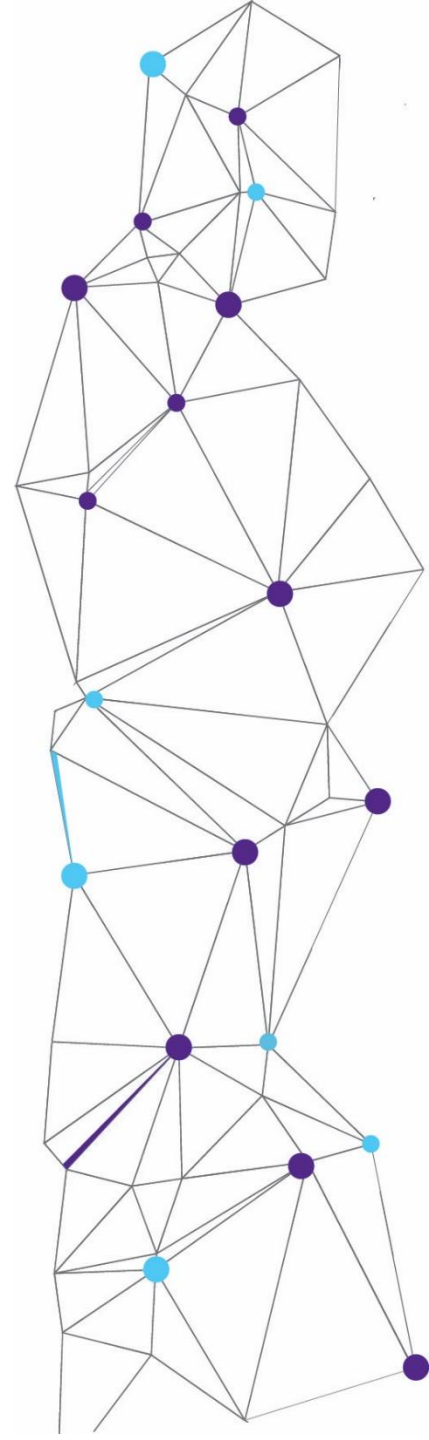
- Community engagement is resistant to being measured.
 - Most attempts to externally assess community engagement have had limited success and uptake.
- There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to community engagement – it is **always context-specific**.
 - Inter-institutional comparisons of community engagement metrics would likely be meaningless.



5. 'MEASURING' COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Problems with typical measurement approaches:

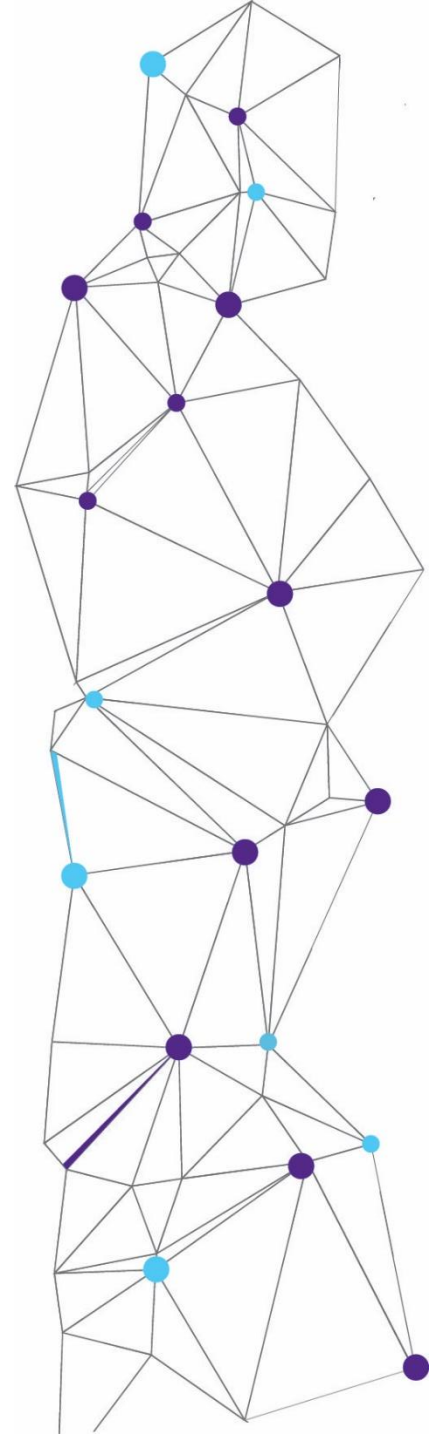
- New Public Management (NPM) tools focusing on comparisons of competitive performance and top-down steering have reached their limits.
- There is increasing acceptance by the European Commission of **multidimensional assessment approaches** that **avoid simplistic indicators**
 - *U-Multirank*
 - *University Regional Innovation Impact Assessment*
 - *Responsible Research and Innovation Indicators*



6. TOWARDS A EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

The TEFCE approach:

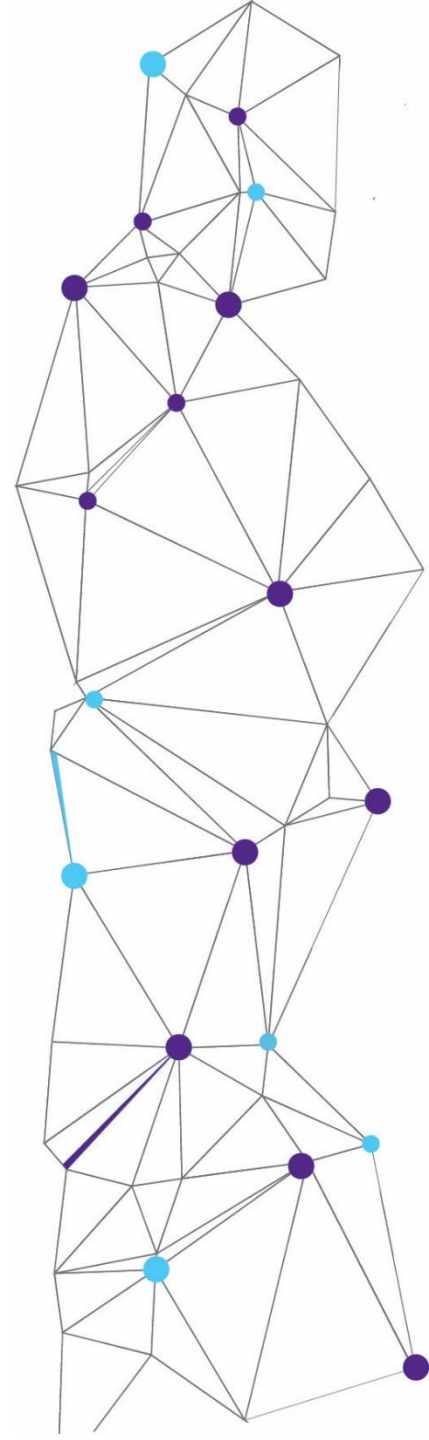
- Dropping the search for the perfect quantitative indicators of community engagement
- **Rejecting** the logic of **ranking** and competitive benchmarking
- **Avoiding** a bureaucratic **self-assessment** process
- **Learning from previous** tools, but **proposing a new approach** with a new set of principles ...



THE TEFCE TOOLBOX: 4 PRINCIPLES

1. Authenticity of engagement

The Toolbox's interpretative framework differentiates authentic community engagement (that provides the community with a meaningful role and tangible benefits) from instrumental and 'pseudo-' engagement.



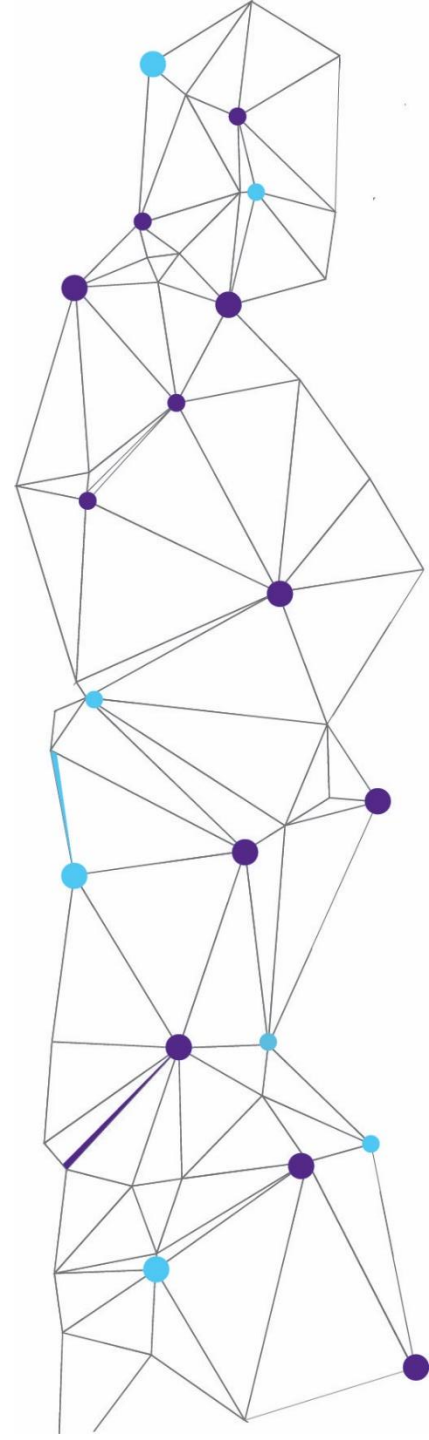
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The Toolbox aims to recognise and award value for different kinds of individual efforts and results in community engagement, thus encouraging universities to develop empowering environments for individuals at the university



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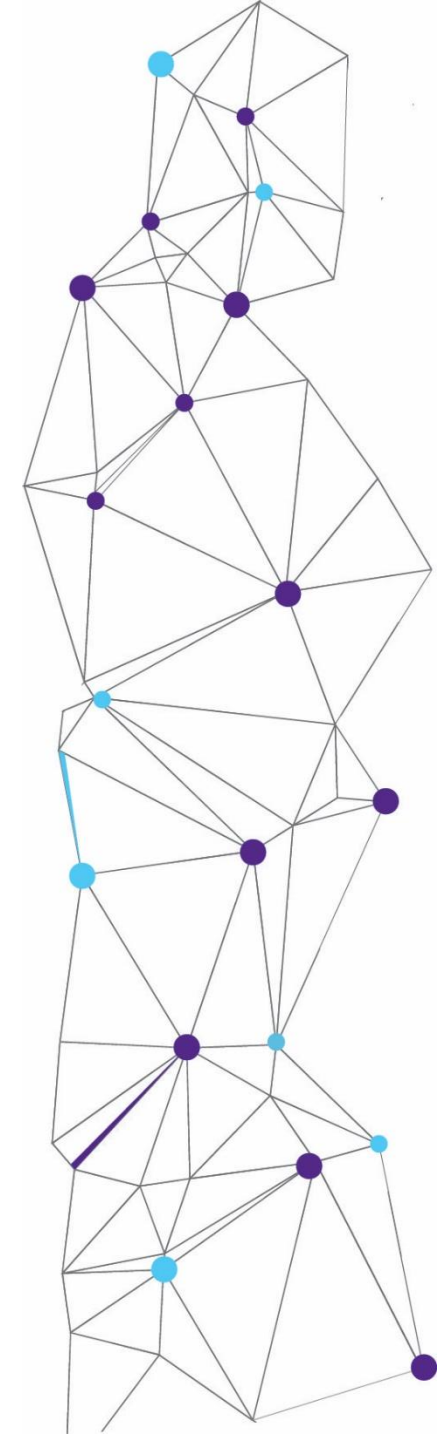
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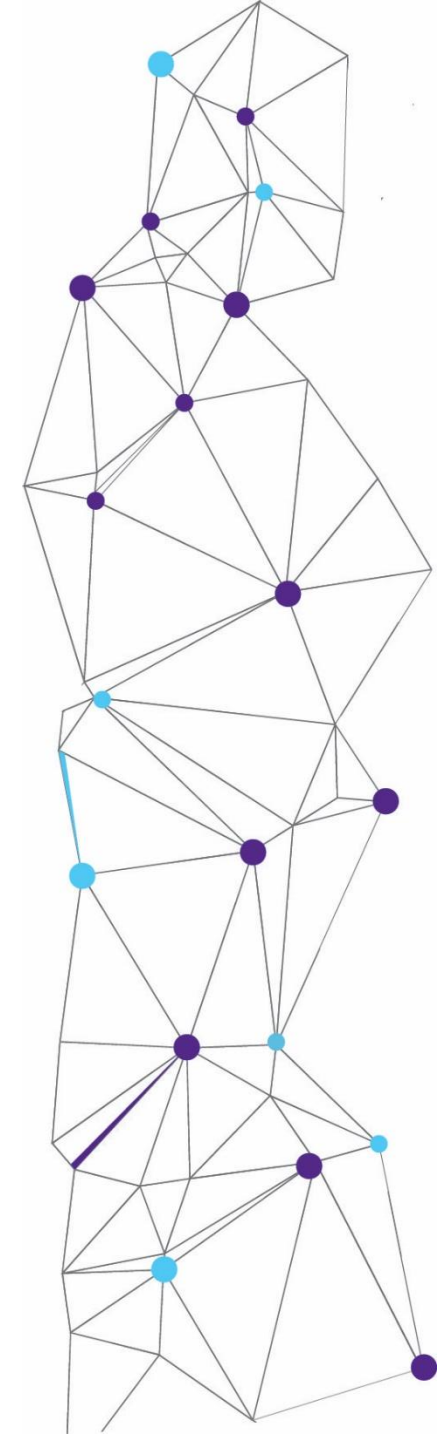
3. Bottom-up rather than top-down steering

The Toolbox is based on mapping stories of practitioners (rather than on best practices selected by senior management) and providing both university staff and the community with a say in the process.



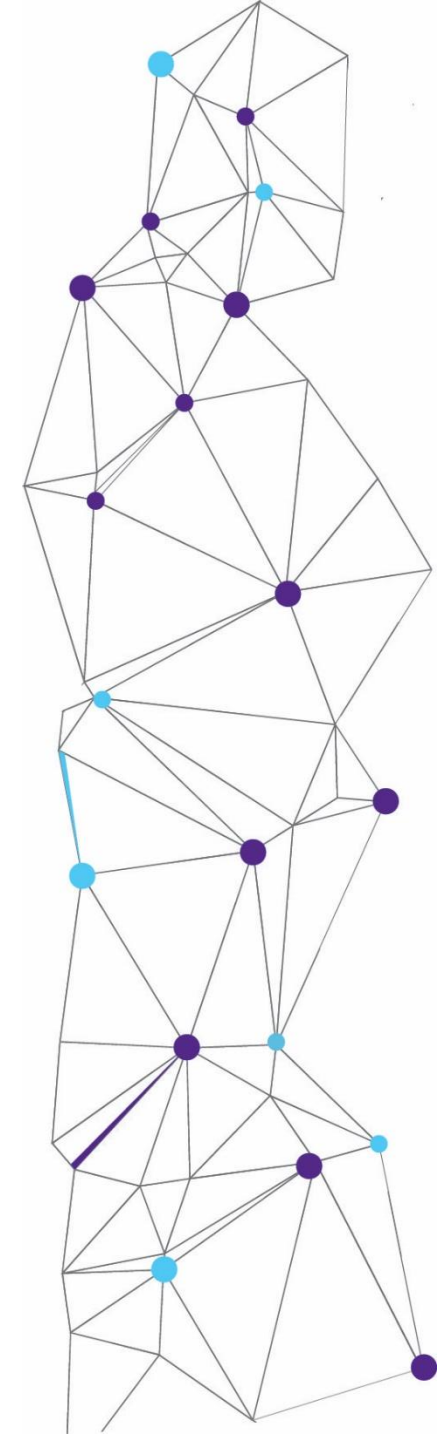
THE TEFCE TOOLBOX: 4 PRINCIPLES

| 1. Authenticity of engagement | 2. Empowerment of individuals |
|---|--|
| The Toolbox's interpretative framework differentiates authentic community engagement (that provides the community with a meaningful role and tangible benefits) from instrumental and 'pseudo-' engagement. | The Toolbox aims to recognise and award value for different kinds of individual efforts and results in community engagement, thus encouraging universities to develop empowering environments for individuals at the university. |
| 3. Bottom-up rather than top-down steering | 4. Learning journey rather than benchmarking |
| The Toolbox is based on mapping stories of practitioners (rather than on best practices selected by senior management) and providing both university staff and the community with a say in the process. | The Toolbox results in a <u>qualitative</u> discovery of good practices, a critical reflection on strengths and areas to improve, achieved through a collaborative learning process. |



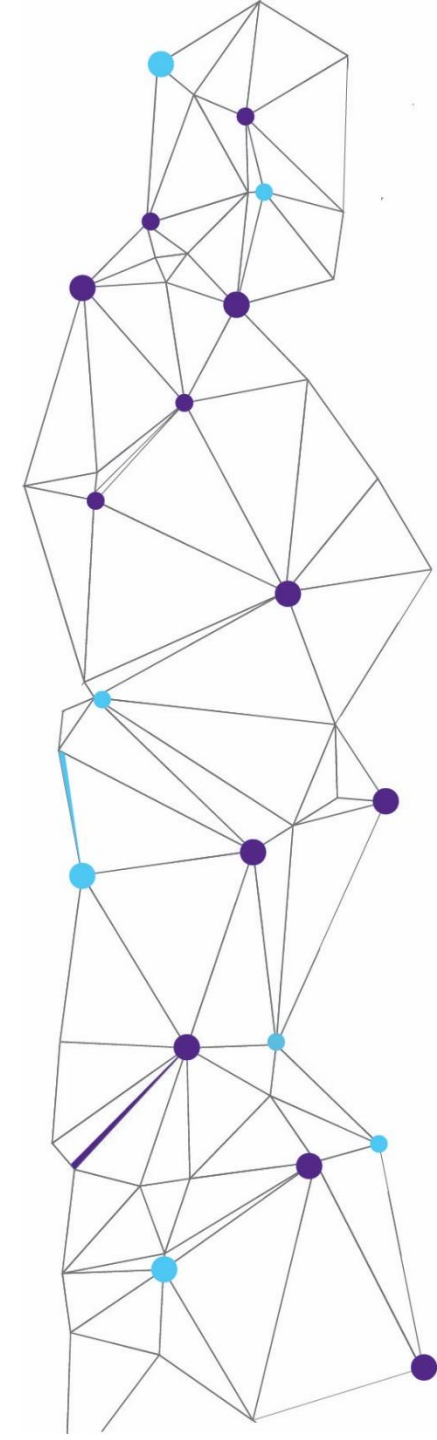
THE TEFCE TOOLBOX: 6 STAGES

| Steps | Description |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Quick scan | Initial discussion by university/community team on the type and extent of community engagement at the university. |
| 2. Evidence collection | Collecting stories of community-engaged practitioners throughout the university. |
| 3. Mapping | Using a TEFCE Toolbox matrix to map the level of community-engagement of the university and to identify good practices. |
| 4. Self-reflection | Open discussions among university management, staff, students and the community on strengths and areas of improvement |
| 5. Institutional report | Promoting good practices and impact, and critical self-reflection for planning improvements to university-community engagement. |
| 6. Into action | Using report to advocate and/or plan improvements to community engagement practices. |



THE TEFCE TOOLBOX: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

| | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | References |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| | Superficial | Ad hoc | Building block | Systematic | Hallmark | |
| 1. <i>Ethos</i> | <i>Pseudo</i> | Tentative | Stable | Authentic | Sustainable | <i>Hoyt (2011)</i> |
| 2. <i>Relationships</i> | <i>Transactional</i> | Bilateral | Network | Systemic | Structural/ transformational | <i>Bowen et al. (2010), Enos and Morton (2003), Clayton et al. (2010)</i> |
| 3. <i>Mutuality</i> | <i>Exploitative</i> | Donating | Assisting | Accommodating | Including | <i>Benneworth (2013)</i> |
| 4. <i>Directionality</i> | <i>Dissemination</i> | Hearing voices | Listening to the voices seriously | Creating structures to hear voices | Co-creation | <i>Hall et al. (2011)</i> |
| 5. <i>Endowment</i> | <i>Betterment</i> | Co-planning | Shared community | Co-determining | Empowerment | <i>Himmelman (2001)</i> |



THE TEFCE TOOLBOX: 7 DIMENSIONS

Engagement activities

DIMENSION I. TEACHING AND LEARNING

DIMENSION II. RESEARCH

DIMENSION III. SERVICE / KNOWLEDGE
EXCHANGE

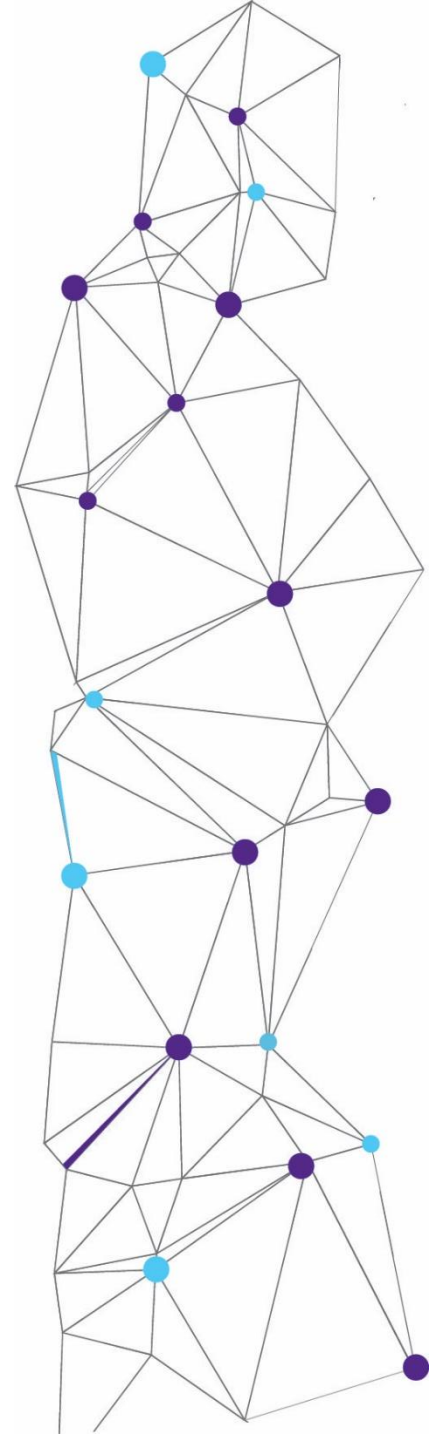
DIMENSION IV. STUDENTS

DIMENSION V. MANAGEMENT
(communication and partnerships)

Supportive environment

DIMENSION VI. MANAGEMENT
(policies and support structures)

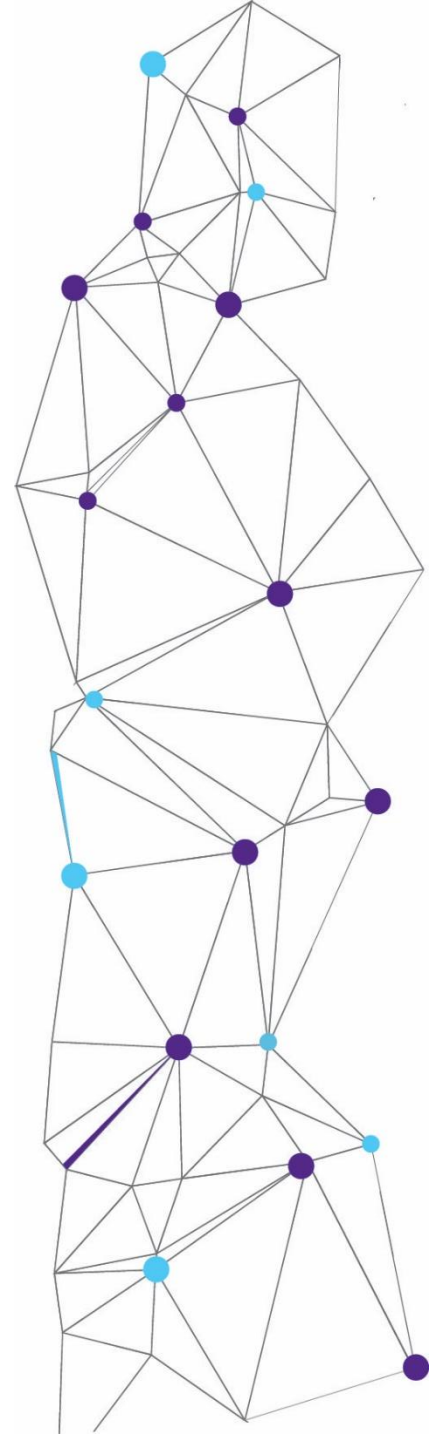
DIMENSION VII. SUPPORTIVE PEERS



THE TEFCE TOOLBOX: MATRIX

Dimension 1: Teaching and learning

| SUB-DIMENSIONS | CRITERIA FOR MAPPING PRACTICES | | | | |
|--|--|---------|---|---------|---|
| | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 |
| Sub-dimension I.1. The university has study programmes that include content about societal needs that are specific to the university's context and its external communities | There are study programmes at the university that ... | | | | |
| | ...make general references to their relevance to the societal needs of university's external communities. | | ... include specific content or make specific links with the societal needs of the university's external communities. | | ... are developed in cooperation with the university's external communities to address a societal need. |
| Sub-dimension I.2. The university has study programmes that include a community-based learning* component for students | Community-based learning is included in relevant study programmes at the university and... | | | | |
| | ... benefits students to develop their knowledge and skills, although there is little evidence yet of their impact on the community. | | ... has demonstrated benefits for students and help community partners address a short-term problem or need. | | ... builds capacities of community partners and bring equal benefits to the students, teaching staff and university as a whole. |
| Sub-dimension I.3. The university has study programmes that are created, reviewed or evaluated in consultation/cooperation with external community representatives | External community representatives that cooperate on certain study programmes ... | | | | |
| | ... are not formally consulted regarding the design of the programmes or courses with which they cooperate. | | ... are formally consulted regarding the design courses with which they cooperate, and their voices are taken into consideration. | | ... co-design and co-evaluate the programmes or courses with which they cooperate. |
| Sub-dimension I.4. The university facilitates the participation of community representatives in the teaching and learning process in some study programmes (in a curricular or extra-curricular context) | External community representatives ... | | | | |
| | ... have a partnership role that does not involve delivery of teaching and learning. | | ... are included occasionally in teaching and learning processes (e.g. extra-curricular guest lecture). | | ... are included continually in teaching and learning processes (e.g. working with students on projects or research) |

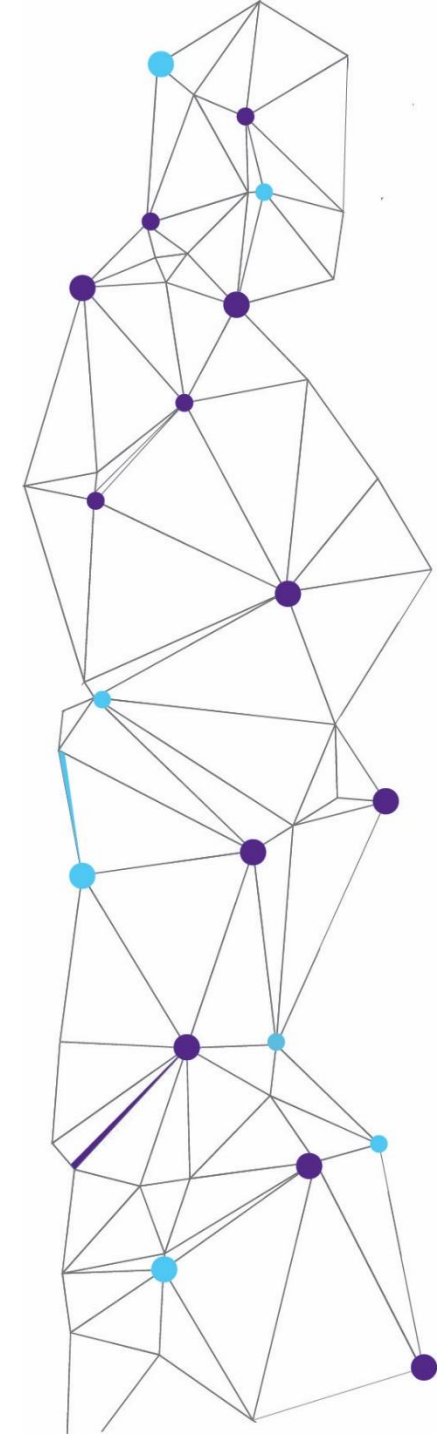


THE TEFCE TOOLBOX: HEATMAP

Synthesis: Community engagement heatmap for Dimension I

| Type of engagement | Heatmap level | | | | | Heatmap criterion |
|------------------------------|---------------|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | | | | | |
| Authenticity of engagement | | | | | | (See sub-dimensions levels above) |
| Societal needs addressed | | | | | | From business needs to needs of vulnerable groups |
| Communities engaged with | | | | | | From businesses and highly-structured organisations to hard-to-reach groups |
| Institutional spread | | | | | | From one department to university-wide |
| Institutional sustainability | | | | | | From short-term projects to embedded/continual activities. |

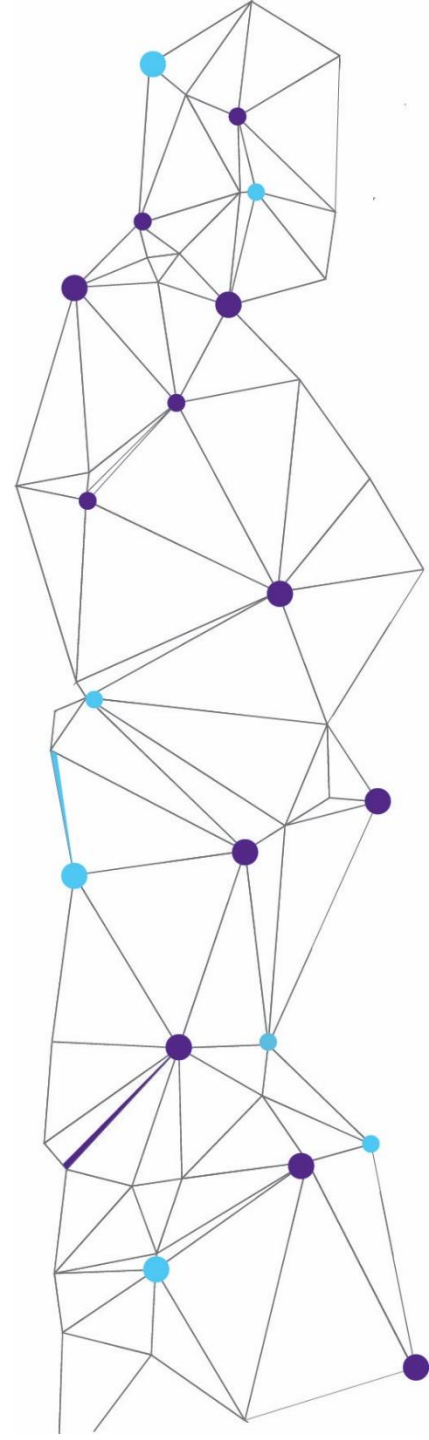
[Insert a narrative description of the heatmap findings and an assessment of the overall achieved level]



PILOTING THE TOOLBOX

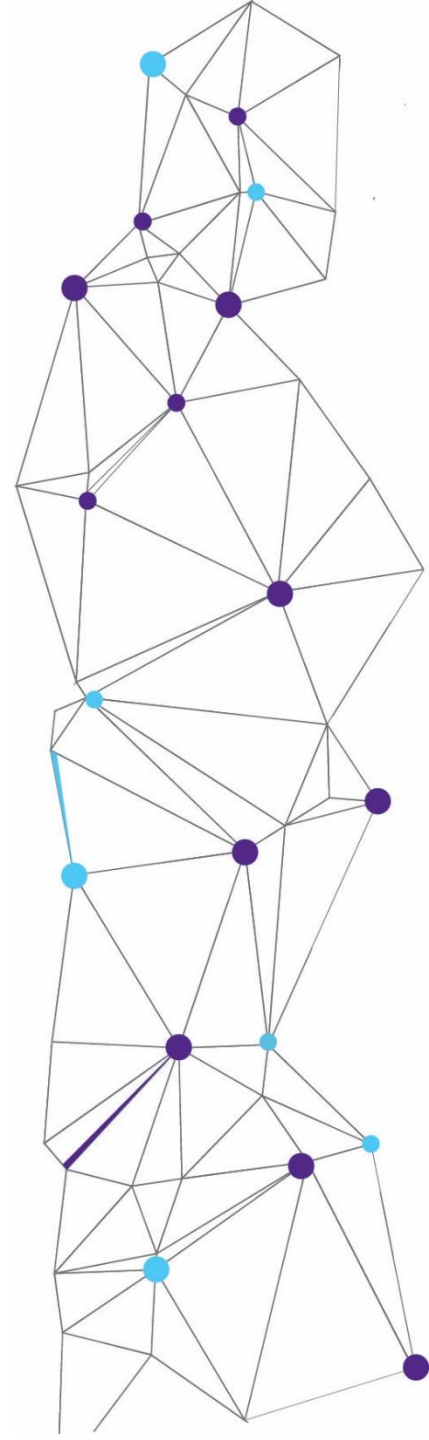


- Piloted at universities in Dresden, Twente, Rijeka and Dublin.
- Involved focus groups with university staff, students and communities.
- Quality of Toolbox framework confirmed!



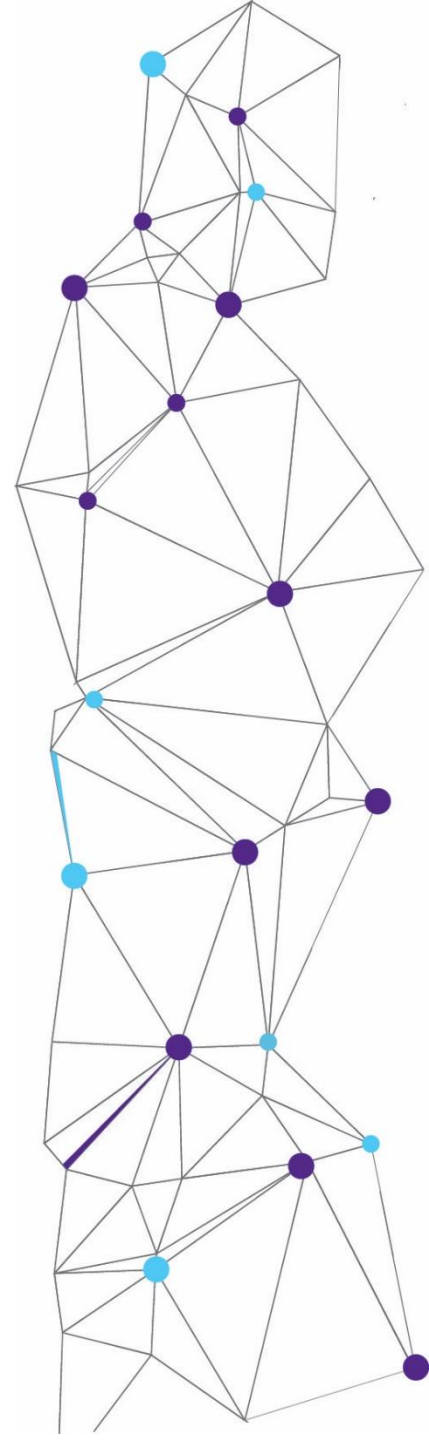
BENEFITS OF THE TOOLBOX

- **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.



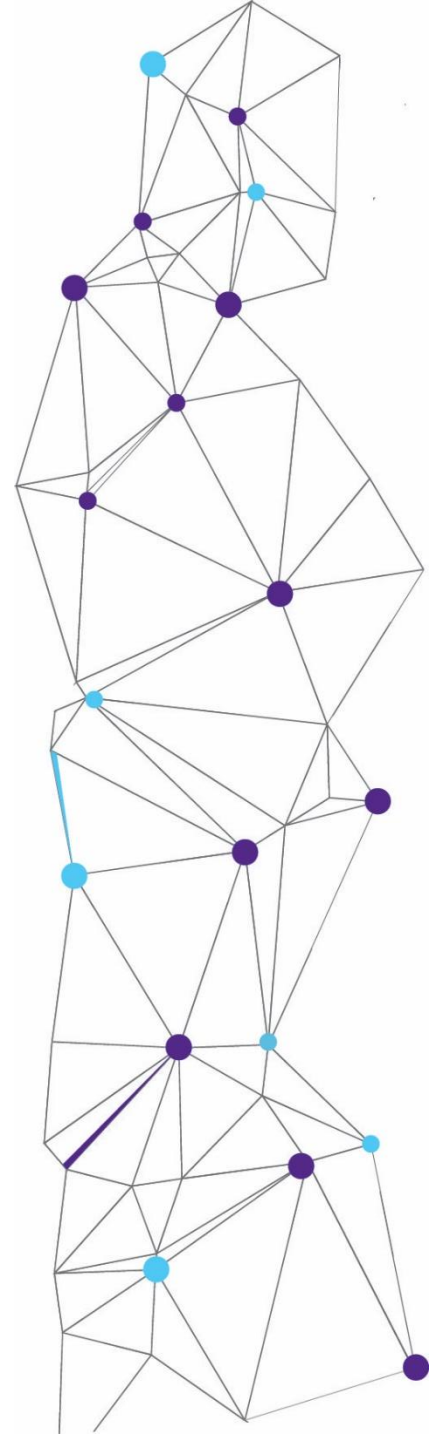
LINK BETWEEN QUALITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The TEFCE toolbox framework represents an **accountability and transparency tool** to measure an institution's level of community engagement
 - >>> a clear link to **quality enhancement in higher education.**



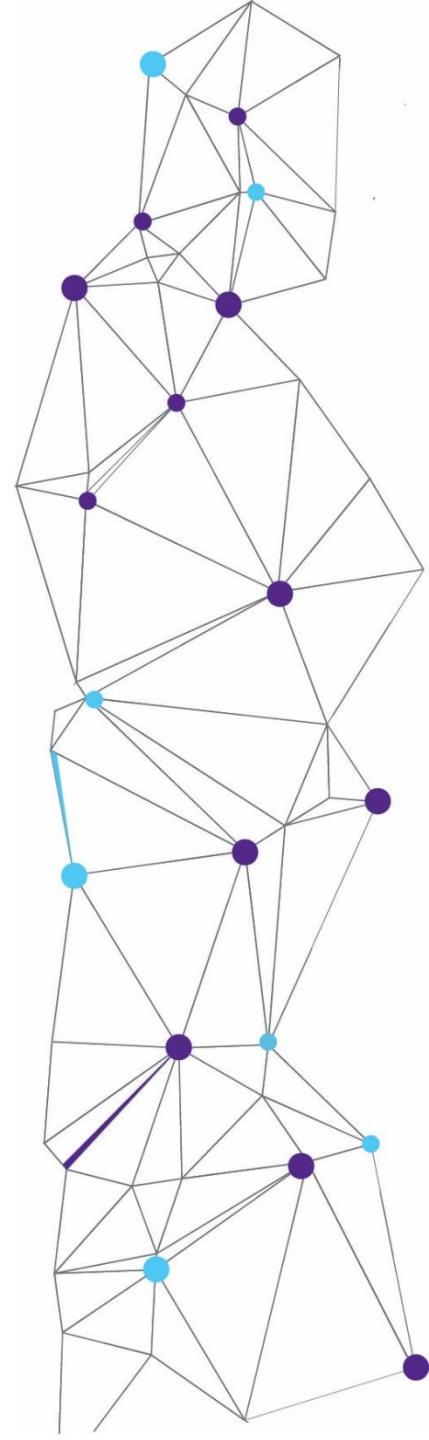
LINK BETWEEN QUALITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- But for now, the Toolbox is for ‘enthusiasts’ and ‘early adopters’ that recognize community engagement as a priority – how to **mainstream community engagement at universities?**
 - The **Toolbox as an optional quality framework** for becoming community-engaged university?
 - Universities should provide **initial and continuing professional training** both for academic and administrative staff?
 - Universities should create **institutional policies, services and organizational structures** that will continuously support community engagement?



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FOR EQAF

- Feasibility for a **trans-national framework** to support community engagement in higher education in Europe:
 - What preconditions do we need?
 - Do we need a link to the ESG? Community engaged practice in the following ESG's standards:
 - 1.2 Design and approval of programs
 - 1.3 Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment
 - 1.5 Teaching staff
 - 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programs



Thank you for your attention!

Contacts:

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