UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

2016 Quality Assurance report

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1. Overview:

During 2017 we conducted quality assurance with all 2016 stakeholders of the UCT Knowledge Co-op; it was our fourth year of doing this. We followed a two-tiered approach:

a. End-Of-Project-Evaluation:

Questionnaires sent out at or soon after completion of the project. The projects included Student theses at Honours and Masters level. Here all stakeholders, i.e. community partners, students and academic supervisors are surveyed.
A smaller number of short projects resulting from compulsory community service in IS Honours or Architecture 2nd year. In these cases no academics are involved in the partnership; community partners and students involved are surveyed.

Questionnaires assess stakeholders' satisfaction with their **experience** during the process, its **outputs** and the **involvement** of all partners. In a qualitative section respondents give feedback on the **most useful** aspect of the project and suggest **improvements**.

27 projects were targeted; we received feedback from 8 Academics, 9 Community Partners and 15 Students. Over 90% of responses in the Quantitative section were in the *Agree* or *Agree strongly* category and the bulk of Qualitative comments were also positive, with negative comments mainly relating to one failed project. Generally feedback on the short projects was slightly less positive.

b. Impact assessment:

A questionnaire one year after completion of the project assesses any impact of the projects in the academic (publications, conference papers, further research) or practical arena (raise awareness, changed policy or practice, funding).
We receive very few responses to the questionnaire which were sent to the community partners. An email was sent to academics (and students were traceable) to identify any academic outputs.

The following pages summarise the feedback received to both assessments.

2. End-Of-Project-Evaluation – dissertation projects

All projects completed during the course of mid 2016 were included in the QA process, as well as those that ended early in 2017 (due to protest-related delays). Each stakeholder was sent a link to an online questionnaire to assess the following areas:

- **Outputs** – was the final project academically sound and did it address the community partner's need; did the student learn from the experience?
- **Experience** – satisfaction with the process and how it was supervised
- **Involvement** – the value of the partnership to all involved and their contribution to it.

There are 4 options for assessing each statement (*Agree strongly, Agree, Disagree, Disagree strongly*). In a qualitative section respondents gave feedback on the most useful aspect of the project and suggested improvements.

a. Responses from Academics (n = 8)

OUTCOMES:

- Academics strongly agreed that the outcomes of the projects were representative of significant academic research.
- Academics strongly agreed that outputs were consistent with overall objectives of the projects.
- Academics agreed that expectations of project partners were met.

STUDENTS:
Academics strongly agreed that:

- the projects improved student's ability to perform research, and developed students' insight into the nature of working with community partners;
- students received appropriate supervision; and
- students showed satisfactory commitment to the projects.

EXPERIENCE:

- Academics generally agreed that participants seemed satisfied with how projects ran, with one disagreeing.
- They also agreed that forming of a partnership was beneficial to all partners.

COMMITMENT

- Academics agreed strongly that Knowledge co-op staff and community partners showed satisfactory commitment to project
- Academics strongly agreed that they themselves showed satisfactory commitment to the project.

THE MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT WAS:

- Exposure and the development of insight of the student into how NGO's work and the intervention environment they work in.
- "The student gained access to marginalised individuals whose stories are normally very difficult to access"

THE INITIAL PROJECT COULD HAVE BEEN IMPROVED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY:

- If the partnership request had come to the KC in the first place it would have benefited from the KC's knowledge and expertise to manage the process.
- "Clearer expectation-setting and management between partners."
- Roles of persons involved must be clearly defined
- Objectives need to be aligned
- Timelines need to be well established
- Timing of requests at a stage when it is possible to find suitable students for it

FURTHER COMMENTS

- "As the student's supervisor I felt that through the placement the student was able to develop important skills and focus in her work to direct her research further. Overall a beneficial experience."
- "Conducting the research through the Knowledge Co-op as a partner created an environment for the student which was closest to working within a real life work environment. I feel the level of professionalism and seriousness of the work was enhanced as a result of the more structured process."

b. Responses from Community Partners (n = 9)

One project failed totally due to the student's lack of commitment. For this project the feedback was consistently negative in questions relating to outcomes, although there was still appreciation for the process.

OUTCOMES:

- Community partners mostly agreed with some disagreeing that outputs met their needs.
- Community partners agreed that the outcome contained significant academic research and that the final report received was understandable (with one strongly disagreeing)
- Most agreed, with one strongly disagreeing, that the project was consistent with overall objectives.

STUDENTS:

- Community partners agreed that the projects improved student's ability to perform research, with one strongly disagreeing.
- Most agreed, but two strongly disagreed, that students involved in these projects developed insights into the nature of the Community partners' work.

EXPERIENCE:

- Most Community partners agreed that they were satisfied with how the project ran with the exception of one who strongly disagreed.
- They also agreed that students received adequate supervision during the project.
- Most agreed that the expectation of all involved were met, with some disagreeing.

INVOLVEMENT:

- Community partners agreed that forming a partnership was beneficial, and that students showed satisfactory commitment to the project, with the exception of one who strongly disagreed.
- They agreed that academic supervisors showed satisfactory commitment to the project.
- Community partners also agreed that they themselves were committed to their projects and strongly agreed that the Knowledge Co-op staff also showed satisfactory commitment.

THE MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT WAS:

- "The development of the partnership"
- "The outcome which met with the programmes objectives"
- Valuable insight for future research
- Independent perspective / information that is credible
- "The student's committed presence with the facilitators partaking in, experiencing and assisting in the program"
- Research confirmed the value of the work done by the organisation.

THE INITIAL PROJECT COULD HAVE BEEN IMPROVED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY:

- The organisation's needs must be clearly communicated in terms of outcomes expected.
- More interaction between the Community partner and the student.
- Had the researcher been able to allocate more time to the project it would have strengthened the argument.

FURTHER COMMENTS:

- "I would love to work again with the Institute; it was just bad luck with a very poor student. Next time I know it will be better."
- "The research was welcome producing very significant insight and information."

c. Responses from Students (n = 15)

OUTPUTS:

- Generally students agree that outputs of significant academic research met community partner needs and were consistent with the overall objectives (with one disagreeing).
- They also agree that their research ability improved through project involvement and that they developed knowledge into how community partners work.

EXPERIENCE:

- Generally students agree that they were satisfied with how their project ran, with one disagreeing and another strongly disagreeing.
- They also agreed that they received appropriate supervision.
- Additionally students were in agreement that the expectation of project partners were met (with one disagreeing)

INVOLVEMENT:

- Generally students agreed that elements of involvement in the partnership were very solid and were beneficial to all involved.
- However there was one that disagreed with the community partner's commitment to their project but all strongly agree that the Knowledge Co-op provided satisfactory support.

OPEN ENDED VIEWS:

- Students felt that they gained valuable insight into the work involved with community engagement and that their research would be appreciated in a relevant and meaningful way.
- Meeting other students with similar interests and sharing our research projects (at Co-op events for students).
- Accessing appropriate participants – and getting to know their stories
- Contact with the community partner was at times lost./ More time to spend in the community
- More language skills on students' part to communicate better.

3. Short Projects - End-Of-Project-Evaluation

These are unsupervised community service or Rapid Research projects.

a. Responses total (n = 8)

OUTPUTS:

- Most agreed that the outputs met the Community Partners needs with one disagreeing and another strongly disagreeing.
- Most strongly agreed students had developed insight into the nature of the work the Community Partners do.
- Most agreed, with one disagreeing that the project was consistent with overall objectives.

EXPERIENCE:

- All agreed that their projects ran satisfactorily
- Most agreed that their expectations were met, with a few disagreeing.
- Most strongly agree that the partnership was beneficial to all and students, community partners and the Knowledge Coop were satisfactorily committed to the project, except one who disagreed.
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THE MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT:

- The positive and meaningful impact on the lives and skill levels of community members
- The learning experience

HOW THE INITIAL PROJECT CAN BE IMPROVED:

- Resources need to be made available so the project can run smoothly, for example - when offering computer classes all computers should have the same operating system, software/application installed to make lesson planning and teaching easier.
- Better scheduling of dates for the proposed project versus the availability of partners
- "Better communication is needed between the organisation and the students"

GENERAL COMMENTS

- It is encouraging that overwhelmingly all partners have found the Co-op team very helpful for their projects.
- "UCT Knowledge co-op is a wonderful partnership and they are doing an amazing job!!! Keep it up!"
- And further how students appreciate the chance to have "positive and meaningful impact on the lives" of those they get to work with.

4. Impact assessment

One year after completion we sent another Questionnaire asking for feedback on the impact of the project in the community realm. Students are not surveyed as they are difficult to reach since most of them are no longer at UCT.

a. From Community partners

Only four community partners sent responses. For them important impacts of the project were:

1. Receiving endorsement for their project.
2. Confirmation that a positive impact was being made.
3. Project results increased partners' capacity to get project funding through more effectively monitoring the impact achieved.
4. Presentation at African Marine Debris Conference (non-academic).
5. All agreed that the project helped raise awareness of the issue

Here some examples of improvements and raised awareness in existing programs and/or services:

- An illustrated document was produced by the student and shared with the target audience; many people have actually implemented some of the solutions presented in it.
- The mothers who had attended the course openly shared what they had learnt and this has encouraged others to attend the course. It raised awareness on the need for mothers to have the support of other mothers in their community, resulting in us running our programmes on a more relational level.
- A presentation of the programme to the Department of Health's New Projects Development Team.
- The project report/information was used to inform an anti-litter campaign specifically targeting cigarette butts.

b. Academic output survey

Due to very low return rates we now request feedback from each academic – and those students we can still reach – regarding publications or academic outputs from the projects they had supervised in the **period 2011 to 2016** (due to the slow progress into publications we include here the period since the start of the Co-op). In total out of 38 projects for which we requested information we received feedback on 26. Some book chapters and articles are pending publication; the following Outputs were reported:

- 3 published articles.[1]
- One study contributed insights to an article.[2]
- An academic acted as advisor for research and the resulting article.[3]
- A CSSR working paper.[4]
- Four conference presentations by the academic supervisors[5] and four more by Masters students.[6]

Longer-term engagement / personal development:

- One academic is continuing research with the community partner; another became a Board member of the NGO she was introduced to;
- A 3-year NRF-funded study with the same NGO developed from a project.
- A follow-up study was developed to deepen the findings of a project.
- One student went on to do her PhD in Scotland in the same field.
- One project created an awareness in both students, who were subsequently much involved in NGO initiatives; it also helped prepare them for opportunities in the corporate world.
- One student reported that her thesis research equipped her with skills and perspectives for her subsequent position as a Qualitative Research Analyst.

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[1] **Boonzaier, F. & Squire, C**. (forthcoming). Health as social citizenship: Rethinking health and social research in South African contexts. *Journal of Health Psychology*. **W Barnett**, G Patten, B Kerschberger, K Conradie, D B Garone, G van Cutsem, C J Colvin. Perceived adherence barriers among patients failing second-line antiretroviral therapy in Khayelitsha, South Africa. *S Afr J HIV Med* 2013;14(4):170-176. DOI:10.7196 /SAJHIVMED.981; **Learmonth, D., Hakala, S. & Keller, M.** (2015). "I can't carry on like this": barriers to exiting the street-based sex trade in South Africa. *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine, 3*(1), 348-365.

[2] **M Dyer, R Mills, B Conradie & J Piesse**. "Harvest of Hope: The Contribution of Peri-Urban Agriculture in South African Townships". 2015. *Agrekon* Vol. 54 , Iss. 4, 73-86, DOI: 10.1080/03031853.2015.1116400

[3] **Marianne Brittijn** (2013). "We're not boys anymore, we need to be courageous": Towards an understanding of what it means to be a man in Lavender Hill, *Agenda*, 27:1, 49-60.

[4] **R Odendaal, J Morar, B Conradie**, "A cost benefit analysis of a technology bundle aimed at improving the resilience of urban households in Rocklands, Mitchells Plain". CSSR Working paper 332, Oct 2013.

[5] **Conrad N, Mutsvangwa T, Doyle A and Douglas T**. "User-centred Design as used in Health Innovation and Design: Addressing Hearing loss in the Elderly." Biomedical Engineering Society Annual Meeting, October 2016, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Paper at the **International Critical Psychology Conference**, Grahamstown, 2015; presentations in **Athens** & **New York**.

[6] **Z Ndzendze**, "The Role of Trust in Childcare". Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines Conference,15 – 18 November 2016, University of Cape Town. **Z Ndzendze**, "Luring the Infant to Life". Anthropology Southern Africa Annual Conference, 30 September - 2 October 2016, University of Venda. **Z Ndzendze**, "Breast is best: Understanding the low breastfeeding rate in the Western Cape". Anthropology Southern Africa Annual Conference, 29 June - 2 July 2014, Rhodes University – Grahamstown. **S Peters**, "'But Sex Work is Good but I don't want to Do It': Black Men's Narratives of Selling Sex". Presentation, Narrative Enquiry for Social Transformation Colloquium, 6 October 2016, Melville, Johannesburg.