UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Quality assurance feedback on the UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP 2014

Knowledge Co-op Team 2014-2015:

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Contents

OVERVIEW

Background

The UCT Knowledge Co-op was established in 2010 with the hope of bridging the gap between the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the broader Cape Town community by facilitating partnerships with community-based change agents through collaborative research.

This report documents the findings of the Quality assurance data collected during October-November 2014. The Knowledge Co-op has successfully seen through many projects since its inception. This is the first time the unit has embarked on an evaluation of all projects from 2010 to 2014. An evaluative study drawing on in-depth interviews with partners from selected projects was conducted 2011-2013.[1]

Categories

Evaluations were conducted in four categories:

1. Post-Project Evaluation:
   Projects involving academic research[2] completed *before* 2014.
2. End of Project Evaluation:
   Projects involving academic research completed *during* 2014.
3. HOCIP Evaluation:
   Projects involving community service (mainly HOCIP[3]) completed *during* 2014.
4. Rapid Research Evaluation:
   Rapid research projects[4] completed *during* 2014.

Each of the four categories had separate evaluation forms, differing marginally in length. The Post-Project Evaluation, in particular, had an added section on Longer-term Impacts.

Key Areas

- Outputs
- Experience
- Involvement
- Longer-term Impacts

Respondents

Respondents were required to specify (self-identify) their role in each of the respective projects they were involved with. Projects were evaluated on a project-by-project basis. In other words, in instances

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[1] See IPD, 2013. *Report on the UCT Knowledge Co-op pilot. Evaluation report at the end of the pilot phase, August 2013.* http://www.knowledgeco-op.uct.ac.za/kco/resources.

[2] Student theses or research (support) by academics.

[3] Community service for Honours in Information Systems, a compulsory component of the IS Hons degree, for which the Co-op facilitates a growing number of community partnerships. The category includes other similar projects.

[4] This category includes short research reports compiled by a team of volunteer interns on issues that do not involve in-depth research.

where an academic had supervised more than one project, the academic was requested to evaluate each project separately. The types of respondents specified in each evaluation (form) were:

- Knowledge Co-op (Staff)
- Civil Society Organisation
- Student
- Academic
- Other

Since the same questionnaire was sent to each of the partners involved in a specific project, we provided for 'Does not apply' option on all questions. Students, for instance, would not be able to say whether their study had met the community partners expectation.

A total of approximately 130 evaluations were circulated in 2014, and 64 responses received. Because only one overwhelmingly positive Rapid Research evaluation response was received, we have chosen to overlook this respondent category in the evaluation findings.

Table 1: Breakdown of evaluation respondents by category

	End of Project Evaluation	Post-Project Evaluation	HOCIP Evaluation	Rapid Research Evaluation
Total Responses	13	33	15	1
Breakdown	Co-op (Staff): 0 Civil Society Organisation: 7 Students: 5 Academic: 1	Co-op (Staff): 1 Civil Society Organisation: 12 Students: 10 Academic: 10	Co-op (Staff): 1 Civil Society Organisation: 5 Students: 7 Academic: 2	Co-op (Staff): 1 Civil Society Organisation: 0 Students: 0 Academic: 0

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS[5]

The feedback on satisfaction with the process and outputs was largely positive – affirmation that the approach and process followed by the Co-op meets the partners' needs. This section provides an overview of the range of responses within the various categories according to the key areas within the evaluations.

Outputs

In the Post-Project responses, for all four questions in the outputs section that related to meeting community partner's needs, accessibility of the final product, student involvement, and consistency (see Table 2), 75% of respondents in this category agreed or strongly agreed that their expectations had been met.

The End-of-Project outcomes section (see Table 3) received more negative responses than the other two categories, mainly in the areas of student involvement, with 26% (4 respondents) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the final outcome met the community partner's needs. A quote from the written responses provides some insight on this: "Often the community partner assumes that the research will prove their theories. It becomes really awkward when the research proves otherwise. Instances where the latter prevails, the inability to deliver a product that works for the community partner is perceived as a failure of the student and the university."

The HOCIP responses in this section were the most positive out of the three categories. None of the respondents strongly disagreed that any outcome had been met, with more than 85% of the responses positive (see Table 4).

Table 2: Post-Project Evaluation 'outputs' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
The final outcome met the community partner's needs.	3%	18%	**61%**	**15%**	3%
The final report is readable for a non-specialist public.	3%	9%	**48%**	**27%**	12%
Student(s) involved developed insight into the nature of working with community partners.	3%	3%	**36%**	**45%**	12%
The project outputs were consistent with overall objectives.	3%	12%	**55%**	**27%**	3%

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[5] Percentages don't always add up exactly to 100% (but all are between 98 – 102) due to rounding off of figures from small respondent numbers.

Table 3: End-of-Project Evaluation 'outputs' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
The final outcome met the community partner's needs.	**13%**	**13%**	63%	13%	0%
The final outcome represents significant academic research.	0%	**19%**	50%	19%	13%
The final report is readable for a non-specialist public.	0%	6%	69%	13%	13%
Student(s) involved in the project improved their ability to perform research.	0%	**25%**	56%	13%	6%
Student(s) involved developed insight into the nature of working with community partners.	0%	**25%**	63%	6%	6%
The project outputs were consistent with overall objectives.	0%	13%	69%	19%	0%

Table 4: HOCIP Evaluation 'outputs' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
The final outcome met the community partner's needs.	**0%**	0%	**67%**	**20%**	13%
Student(s) involved developed insight into the nature of working with community partners.	**0%**	7%	**27%**	**60%**	7%
The project outputs were consistent with overall objectives.	**0%**	13%	**60%**	**27%**	0%

Experience

The Post-Project (see Table 5) and End-Of-Project (see Table 6) responses for the experience section of the survey were more negative than the HOCIP responses, with 20% of respondents in these two categories disagreeing that their overall expectations had been met, while all HOCIP respondents agreed or strongly agreed in response to the same question (see Table 7).

Table 5: Post-Project Evaluation 'experience' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
Students on the project received appropriate supervision.	0%	6%	39%	36%	18%
Overall, the expectations of the project partners have been met.	0%	**21%**	52%	21%	6%

Table 6: End-of-Project Evaluation 'experience' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
Participants in the project were satisfied with how it ran.	0%	**19%**	75%	6%	0%
Students on the project received appropriate supervision.	0%	**19%**	63%	13%	6%
Overall, the expectations of the project partners have been met.	6%	**19%**	69%	6%	0%

Table 7: HOCIP Evaluation 'experience' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
Participants in the project were satisfied with how it ran.	0%	7%	60%	27%	7%
Overall, the expectations of the project partners have been met.	0%	0%	**67%**	**33%**	0%

Involvement

This section probed whether the partnership was beneficial to all organisations involved and well conducted, and whether all involved showed satisfactory commitment to the project. Although across the board most responses were positive (75% or above agreeing or strongly agreeing), with none of the respondents strongly disagreeing on the many aspects of involvement, there were spikes in disagreement in relation to the level of efficiency of partners (see Table 9 and Table 10), benefit to partners (see Table 8 and Table 9) and the commitment of students and community partners (see Table 8, Table 9, Table 10).

Table 8: Post-Project Evaluation 'involvement' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
Forming a partnership was beneficial to all organisations involved.	0%	12%	52%	27%	9%
The student(s) involved showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	0%	6%	33%	36%	24%
The academic supervisor(s) showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	0%	0%	45%	42%	12%
The community partner showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	0%	3%	45%	36%	15%
The UCT Knowledge Co-op staff showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	0%	0%	39%	61%	0%

Table 9: End-of-Project Evaluation 'involvement' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
Forming a partnership was beneficial to all organisations involved.	0%	13%	50%	31%	6%
The partnership was conducted efficiently.	0%	19%	63%	13%	6%
The student(s) involved showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	0%	19%	56%	19%	6%
The academic supervisor(s) showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	0%	6%	50%	25%	19%
The community partner showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	0%	13%	63%	13%	13%
The UCT Knowledge Co-op staff showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	0%	6%	38%	56%	0%

Table 10: HOCIP Evaluation 'involvement' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
Forming a partnership was beneficial to all organisations involved.	**0%**	0%	47%	47%	7%
The partnership was conducted efficiently.	**0%**	**20%**	20%	60%	0%
The student(s) involved showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	**0%**	**7%**	27%	53%	13%
The community partner involved showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	**0%**	**7%**	53%	33%	7%
The UCT Knowledge Co-op staff showed satisfactory commitment to the project.	**0%**	0%	40%	60%	0%

Longer-term Impacts

Only the Post-Project survey had a section on longer-term impacts, with mixed findings in this section (see Table 11).

Table 11: Post-Project Evaluation 'longer-term impacts' responses

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does not Apply
The project results helped raise awareness of the issue(s) more widely.	0%	21%	52%	15%	12%
The project results led to improvements in an existing policy, programme or service.	3%	24%	39%	6%	27%
The project increased the partners' capacity to get project funding.	3%	18%	18%	3%	58%

More specific longer-term outputs and impacts could be gleaned from the written responses and are outlined below. From the responses received, it was gathered that there were post-project outputs such as publications both academic and non-academic in the form of reports, newspaper articles, one peer-reviewed journal article, presentations and contributions to public resources.

Academic Publications:
- 2013 "Perceived adherence barriers among patients failing second line antiretroviral therapy in Khayelitsha, South Africa", South African Journal of HIV Medicine, 14(4): 166-169,

doi:10.7196/sajhivmed.981 (W Barnett, G Patten, B Kerschberger, K Conradie, D B Garone, G van Cutsem, Christopher J. Colvin).

- 2012 "High proportions of virological re-suppression among patients failing 2nd line ART: The Khayelitsha experience, South Africa", Oral Presentation, MSF Scientific Day 2012, Royal Society of Medicine, London (Daniela Garone, Gem Patten, Gilles van Cutsem, Eric Gomaere, Christopher J. Colvin, Whitney Barnett, Bernhard Kerschberger, Jan Kunene, Karien Conradie).
- CSSR Working paper, the paper is on the Centre for Social Science Research(CSSR)'s website: https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/8574
- Two articles in the process of peer-review

We are aware of another publication not included in these responses:
- 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: Empowering women for gender equity, DOI:10.1080/10130950.2013.804744.

Non-Academic outputs:
- "Keep the dream" Resource guide of post-school opportunities for rural school leavers
- Baseline report of the challenges to learning and school attendance present in Philippi
- Draft Model Law on Prostitution for South Africa
- Academic Poster for two undergraduate studies
- Presented at the Launch of UCT's Best Practice website

Media:
- Project was presented at the Information Systems Project EXPO to the wider public
- Big Issue article in 2013
- Argus article on Shark spotters

New research projects on same or related theme:
- It helped launched the Social Markers of TB project, which now has a number of funders and collaborators.
- Fourth year students have to participate in compulsory community projects
- Photo voice study of prostituted women as follow-up to exit strategies study
- Doing the related survey yearly to analyse trends
- Helped launched the Social Markers of TB project, which now has a number of funders and collaborators
- Follow-up project with same partner to improve aspects of the electronic database system

Impact on programmes:
Student research resulted in

- an internal conversation within MSF about how best to understand and manage second-line treatment failure in their patients
- a different way of looking at Single Parenting and Fatherhood involvement in Ikamva Labantu

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations have been collated and summarised from the written responses section of the survey. Across all the categories, commonly the feedback expressed the following recommendations:

Reports and Usable Outputs

- Develop a way to minimise the risk that research for partners will not be suitable for outputs beyond the dissertation; one community groups expressed "sadness that the project remained hypothetical after the (initial) excitement".
- Manage expectations better; the scope of student theses is limited and not able to address big challenges. One student reflected "I didn't realise how little I could help and felt entitled to help. I was surrounded by experts in the field".
- Also expectations of students regarding field work.
- Assess the impact of the research beyond the finalizing of the dissertation(s).
- Better management of the report-back aspect of students' commitment to community partners, as reports from students are at times delayed and difficult to arrange (logistically).
- The Knowledge Co-op should consider creating a separate process for students to follow through with to ensure that the research is presented in a truly meaningful manner.

Communication and Accountability

Holding partners accountable is important. Although hurdles and challenges are unavoidable in the research process they can be made more manageable through positive communication. Respondents cited communication as a general factor that negatively affected research output and overall experience.

- Have a monitored and contractual communication structure between the student and the community partner, setting timelines and contact dates between partners in advance. This could also help facilitate trust-building between the community partner and the researchers.

Process and Context Awareness

- It is recommended that the Knowledge Co-op finds ways of ensuring that all stakeholders involved with the projects are informed of the processes involved with research. One way of facilitating this is through conducting workshops for various stakeholders.
  - For example a workshop for student researchers that gives insight into what to expect, common challenges, interpersonal skills, context, and self-awareness would be helpful before beginning the commitment to community partner. The community partner may assist with this process.
  - Community partner workshops could focus on communication, research processes, timelines, and general university context. This could also encourage stronger commitment to the projects and their outcomes.
- Travel arrangements to reach study / engagement sites can be challenging for students.
- More contact time for students to get to know and see experience the context.

Marketing

- It is recommended that the Knowledge Co-op consider creating a marketing campaign/strategy to increase the awareness of the unit amongst academics, students and the broader UCT community.

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

The commendations have been collated and summarised from the written responses section of the survey. The feedback expressed the following commendations:

Relationships and Partnerships

The Knowledge Co-op is commended for providing an opportunity for partners to strengthen ties with UCT and the broader Cape Town community, helping to build meaningful relationships with key stakeholders in various organisations, departments and faculties. The Co-op plays a valuable role in connecting UCT with the community through research and service, contributing to the potential for further collaboration between UCT and society.

The support of the Co-op in practical matters, e.g. communication, logistics was appreciated.

Valuable research

The Co-op shares the vision of embracing the objective of community engagement for human development. It is commended for encouraging valuable and helpful research, "giving much appreciated context to the work that students' are meant to research and understand". Contributing to the understanding of and resolving of real problems with research. With the help of the Co-op, "the dynamic academic resource found within a university environment was put to use in a realistic and somewhat needy community."

Action Learning and Graduateness

Through facilitating connections with community partners, the Co-op opens up an opportunity for students to "gain insight into the application of theory at actual grassroots levels outside of the lecture theatre… understanding the tensions between theory and practice and the mismatch between the two." The participants grow during the process as a result of being more informed due to the research being conducted, it is "an honest way to learn the limits and possibilities of research" and "has added immensely to my academic and professional growth".