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Community engagement in higher education: trends, practices and policies

Analytical report



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Analytical report

Thomas Farnell

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ABOUT NESET

NESET is an advisory network of experts working on the social dimension of education and training. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture initiated the establishment of the network as the successor to NESET II (2015-2018), NESSE (2007-2010) and NESET (2011-2014). The Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI) is responsible for the administration of the NESET network. For any inquiries please contact us at: info-neset@ppmi.lt.

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DEDICATION:

The author would like to dedicate this report to the memory of Paul Benneworth, whose academic work on community engagement provided the inspiration for this report and whose advice and mentorship will be sadly missed.

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Executive summary

This report argues (based on a comprehensive review of the literature) that universities¹ play a crucial role in responding to societal needs, and can further enhance their societal impact at local, national and international levels through community engagement. The report proposes a broad definition of community engagement in higher education, whereby:

- **engagement** refers to the range of ways in which university staff, students and management interact with external communities in mutually beneficial ways, either as part of teaching and research or as part of other projects and joint initiatives;
- **community** is defined as 'communities of place, identity or interest', and thus includes among others, public authorities, businesses, schools, civil society and citizens;
- **societal needs** addressed through community engagement refer to all political, economic, cultural, social, technological and environmental factors that influence the quality of life within society.

While this report was drafted before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current crisis arguably makes the topic of community engagement more important than ever. The arguments presented in relation to the dimensions, good practices and benefits of community engagement will be highly relevant to policymakers and university leaders developing plans for the recovery and development of higher education in the post-crisis period.

A re-emerging policy agenda

Universities have always interacted with their surrounding communities and responded to societal needs. There is evidence that universities play a key role in supporting economic development and the well-being of citizens, and that the benefits of higher education are not limited to students and graduates but extend across society. Since the late 20th century, there has been a re-emergence of interest in the societal role played by universities. The expectation that universities should contribute to social and economic development has become known as the 'third mission' of higher education.

In practice, however, the third mission of higher education has focused on the economic role and impacts of universities. The role of the university in strengthening democratic values and civic engagement, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, contributing to cultural development, informing public policy and addressing large-scale social challenges has not been nearly as prominent a priority.

The broader societal contribution of higher education is now re-emerging as a policy priority in many countries, due to increasing societal challenges worldwide. In addition to the 'grand challenges' of climate change, migration and ageing societies faced worldwide, societies worldwide have experienced increasing income inequality, decreasing social cohesion, declining trust toward political institutions and a rise in populist attitudes. Universities are not only called upon to respond to these challenges, but are themselves affected by declining public trust with regard to their legitimacy and their impartiality as experts (reflected in rising 'science denial' and 'expert rejection'). In this context, the engagement of universities with their communities to address societal needs cannot be considered a trivial policy concern.

¹ This report uses the terms 'university' to refer to all forms of tertiary education institutions, including research-intensive universities and universities of applied science.

The effects of the COVID-19 crisis will arguably further reinforce the priority of community engagement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, stories quickly emerged of the ways in which universities around the world had mobilised their knowledge and resources to respond rapidly to the crisis by addressing a range of societal needs. The question of how universities can contribute to social and economic recovery in the post-COVID-19 period is likely to be at the top of policymakers' agendas in the years to come.

Existing policies and practices

Around the world, a number of policies and initiatives exist to support universities' broader societal contributions. The topic has become increasingly prominent in the policies and programmes of transnational institutions (the EU, UN and OECD), as well as at national and university level. While a range of terms such as 'civic', 'public', 'regional' and 'societal' engagement are employed in such contexts, this report argues that all of these can be considered synonyms for community engagement as defined in the report.

Community engagement can be misunderstood as focusing on charitable actions and 'good neighbourliness' between a university and its immediate local community. The concept is in fact much broader in scope and meaning. It encompasses all of the university's core activities, and potentially involves local, regional, national and international dimensions. Many European universities are already community-engaged in this broader sense, and the report features illustrative good practices of such engagement from both Europe and the United States. Community engagement practices are presented according to five thematic dimensions of a 'whole university' approach to community engagement. These can be summarised as follows:

- **Teaching and learning** – in which the most common form is community-based learning (or 'service learning'), a teaching methodology that combines classroom instruction, community service, student reflection and civic responsibility.
- **Research** – in which the most common form is community-based research, a collaborative form of research that addresses a community-identified need, validates community knowledge, and contributes to social change. Another form is citizen science, whereby citizens participate in scientific research by 'crowd-sourcing' data or through their full inclusion in all stages of research.
- **Service and knowledge exchange** – whereby academic staff provide consultancy and capacity-building for community groups, or contribute as experts in economic and political debates.
- **Student initiatives** – whereby students directly address the needs of external communities by launching their own community engagement activities, either via student organisations or through activism and advocacy initiatives.
- **University-level engagement** – whereby universities open up their facilities to the community (including as venues for cultural and social activity, or as providers of other public services) and provide open access to educational resources.

Challenges and obstacles

Higher education systems face significant pressures, as a result of which community engagement is often treated as a low priority. These pressures include global competition in higher education, decreasing levels of public funding, increased scrutiny of universities' performance, and the pressure to prioritise economic development activities.

Universities also face internal challenges in relation to the way community engagement is addressed at the university management level. Community engagement takes different forms in different academic disciplines, and the diversity of these forms makes it complex

to coordinate community engagement across an entire institution. Another challenge exists at the level of the acceptance of engagement by academics as a legitimate knowledge activity (i.e. as a 'normal' part of teaching and research), since changing academic practice is a long-term process. Any effort to institutionalise community engagement will thus require time, coordination and support.

Finally, the management of community engagement (whether at the level of the higher education system or within individual universities) is further complicated by the difficulty of measuring it quantitatively. This falls into a broader discussion on the problems of relying on metrics for performance assessments in research and higher education; however, in the case of community engagement the problem is particularly acute as such activities are, by definition, context-specific.

Policy recommendations to address the challenges

Providing due recognition and support for community engagement at policy level could allow universities to mobilise their resources to achieve a much greater positive impact in addressing Europe's pressing societal needs. The gradual rise of references to 'grand challenges', 'societal impact', 'relevance' and 'engagement' in the context of higher education and research policy suggests that Europe currently enjoys a unique opportunity to facilitate such support. This report presents policy approaches and concrete recommendations to support community engagement in higher education across Europe. These can be summarised as follows:

Four possible policy approaches exist to support community engagement

Policymakers wishing to support community engagement can employ various policy approaches, presented here from the most to the least comprehensive:

1. Transforming framework conditions (system-level embedding of community engagement in higher education and research).
2. Targeted supportive policies (increasing the prevalence and quality of community engagement activities at system level).
3. Incorporating community engagement into existing programmes (encouraging community engagement activities at the level of individual universities).
4. Status quo/bottom-up initiatives (no specific policies other than general references to 'relevance' and 'impact').

This report recommends that Approaches 2 and 3 should be considered as a first phase in supporting the institutionalisation of community engagement, with Approach 1 being an aspirational future scenario.

A coherent policy approach will need to create synergies with other policy areas and existing programmes

This also entails ensuring joined-up governance across other policy areas (e.g. connecting higher education, research, regional development, etc.) and ensuring that the policy is embedded into existing initiatives within higher education and research policy. For example, community engagement can be connected to both the European Green Deal² and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The policy would also benefit from establishing a clear relationship with other 'third mission' priorities within higher education policy, i.e. by distinguishing between economically driven engagement and community engagement.

² COM (2019) 640

Community engagement can also be incorporated as a priority or dimension within existing policies, programmes and initiatives in higher education and research. The table below provides an overview of potential synergies between community engagement and existing policy priorities, as well as with existing programmes and initiatives of the European Commission:

Policy area	Policy priorities at national and transnational level connected to community engagement	European Commission programmes and initiatives (non-exhaustive list) connected to community engagement
Higher education policy	<p><u>Major overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching and learning ▪ Relevance of higher education ▪ Social dimension / social inclusion in higher education <p><u>Potential overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountability and quality assurance ▪ Internationalisation 	<p><u>European Education Area</u> <u>European Higher Education Area</u></p> <p><u>Major overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Erasmus+ (Key Action 1 - Individual mobility; Key Action 2 - Strategic partnerships; European Universities Initiative: Knowledge Alliances) <p><u>Potential overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eurydice (e.g. data collection on community engagement) ▪ NESET (e.g. further analyses of community engagement policies and practices) ▪ U-Multirank (e.g. upscaling indicator on community service learning)
Research and innovation policy	<p><u>Major overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (Societal) impact of research ▪ Responsible research and innovation (RRI); citizen science; science education <p><u>Potential overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open innovation ▪ Research missions 	<p><u>European Research Area</u> <u>Open Science</u></p> <p><u>Major overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon Europe): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible Research and Innovation - Citizen science
Other policy areas	<p><u>Major overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active citizenship ▪ Social inclusion ▪ Sustainable Development Goals <p><u>Potential overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional development ▪ Smart specialisation ▪ Climate and energy 	<p><u>Major overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) <p><u>Potential overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ European Institute of Technology ▪ Smart Specialisation Platform ▪ European Green Deal

The European Universities Initiative could play a key role in pushing forward the community engagement agenda. This stems from the initiative's focus on connecting academics, researchers and students with regions, cities, businesses, civil society and citizens to co-create solutions to the most pressing societal challenges linked to Sustainable Development Goals. A tool such as U-Multirank could also consider the feasibility and benefits of expanding its existing indicator related to Community Service Learning (currently limited to one subject group), in order to gain greater insight into the prevalence of institutionalised community-based learning at European universities.

Policy levers should focus on building capacities for community engagement

Since community engagement is context-specific and involves a wide range of activities and stakeholders, it would be inappropriate at an initial stage to employ policy levers that rely on compliance with prescribed standards, or on the measurement of quantitative targets, since such measures would be unlikely to result in the desired outcome. Prescribing the type or volume of community engagement activities that should be carried out would at best result in reactive rather than proactive measures by universities that would focus on meeting targets rather than the real societal needs of the communities with which the universities engaged. The optimal policy levers would be those that address capacity-building, thereby supporting institutional change and improvement.

Joint action is required from the European Commission, EU Member States, international stakeholders and universities

The report concludes with a series of specific policy recommendations for different stakeholders. These recommendations follow a similar structure, and include the following elements (whether at transnational, national or institutional level):

- Establishing the societal role of universities as a priority within future policy frameworks and/or institutional strategies.
- Developing new policies and programmes to support this objective, and/or incorporating community engagement into existing programmes, tools and initiatives where potential exists for synergy.
- Consolidating, strengthening and creating synergies with existing thematic networks and initiatives to support community engagement in higher education.

The report concludes that in order to provide community engagement with greater recognition and support at policy and university levels, the necessary approach must be gradual, developmental and qualitative, rather than rushed, top-down and driven by metrics.

Chapter 1. Background: the role of higher education in responding to societal challenges

What are universities for? The answer to this simple question may appear self-evident to many: universities carry out teaching and research. Yet the question of what role universities should play in modern society has been a matter of continuing debate and competing visions since the 1960s (e.g. Kerr [1966], Bok [1982], Boyer [1990] and Readings [1996]). The debate continues to this day (e.g. Barnett [2010], Collini [2012], Barnett [2018], Sperlinger and McLellan [2018]). It is precisely this question that underlies this analytical report on community engagement in higher education.

The position put forward in this report is that the mission of universities in the 21st century should include responding to societal needs, and that this mission should be carried out by engaging systematically with external communities. The first chapter of the report explains how the subject of community engagement in higher education has become increasingly prominent over the last few decades. The following chapters define in greater detail what is meant by the terms 'community' and 'engagement', and what types of activities these involve in practice. Finally, the report reflects on the obstacles to community engagement that exist in the current context of higher education. It concludes with a series of recommendations for the European Commission, national governments and other stakeholders, aimed at strengthening community engagement in higher education across Europe.

While the report was drafted before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current crisis arguably makes the topic of community engagement more important than ever. The arguments presented here on the dimensions, good practices and benefits of community engagement will be highly relevant to policymakers and university leaders developing plans for the recovery and development of higher education in the post-crisis period (see Annex IV for a note on the relationship between community engagement and COVID-19).

1.1. The role of universities in society: a bird's-eye-view of the key issues

The traditional response to the question 'What are universities for?' has been to refer to two core missions pursued by such institutions: teaching (the transfer of existing knowledge to students) and research (the creation of new knowledge). In the late 20th century, the 'third mission' of higher education emerged as a new term to refer to the active contribution made by universities to social and economic development (Laredo, 2007; Zomer and Benneworth, 2011), implying the emergence of a fundamentally new purpose and set of activities for universities in the modern world. The reality, however, is that universities have been closely tied to society throughout their history, and have always needed to respond to societal needs. The following sections provide a brief overview of the ways in which universities interact with their host societies, and how the recent interest in the third mission of higher education came about.

Benefits of universities to society

From their beginnings in the Middle Ages, universities have been 'fundamentally societal institutions' (Benneworth, 2018, p. 19). They responded to the needs of powerful patrons ranging from the Church to the state, each of them seeking to create a highly educated elite to suit their purposes (Bender, 1988; Harvie, 1993). Benneworth (2018) further argues that it is precisely this feature of universities – that of being 'inextricably intertwined, responsive to and beneficial for societies' – that has ensured the longevity of the idea of the university to this day, despite numerous social upheavals in Europe's

history. Pinheiro et al. (2012a) illustrate the ways in which universities, throughout their existence, responded to societal needs. These are summarised in Box 1.1.

Box 1.1: Historical overview of university responses to societal needs

Social change	Urgent desire of the sponsor	University example
Agricultural revolution	Producing religious administrators	Bologna (11th-century Italy)
Emergence of nobility	Educating loyal administrators	Paris (12th-century France)
Urbanisation	Educating an administrative elite to manage trade	Catholic University of Leuven (15th century)
Sustaining national communities	Validating the state by imagining the nation	Lund University (17th century)
Creating a technical elite	Creating a technical, as well as administrative, elite	Humboldt University, Berlin (19th century)
Promoting progress	Creating economically useful knowledge	Land-Grant Universities (19th-20th century U.S.)
Supporting democracy	Creating elites for non-traditional communities	Dutch Catholic Universities (20th century)
Creating mass democratic societies	Equipping citizens with the knowledge to function in a mass democracy	UK 'Plate Glass' universities of the Robbins era (1960s)

Source: Adapted from Pinheiro et al. (2012) in Benneworth and Osborne (2014)

The historical examples provided above illustrate that teaching and research are often *inherently* societal in character: the new knowledge created through research results in new solutions to societal problems, while students completing their studies go out 'into society' in professions and occupations that correspond to societal needs and contribute to solving problems.

Other perspectives on the embeddedness of universities in society emphasise the impact universities have on their localities in terms of direct economic and social benefits. Considerable evidence exists that higher education makes a difference to individuals and to society at large – for instance, through positive correlations between a higher level of education and better life outcomes in terms of active citizenship, civic engagement, health, well-being and a lower probability of being involved in crime (Brennan et al., 2010; Brennan et al., 2013; Desjardins and Schuller, 2006). In addition, the benefits of higher education 'are not limited to people who are or have been students', but extend across society (Brennan et al., 2013, p. 18). Universities also have a considerable impact as major employers in their regions; as creators of and venues for cultural and social activity; and as providers of various public services, particularly in the field of health and education (Goddard and Puukka, 2008). According to Scott (2010, p. 372), universities have profoundly transformed the cities and localities in which they are based. This includes becoming 'dominant civic institutions' in modern cities, as well as bringing a massive influx of student and graduate populations into the local environment, resulting in substantial social and cultural changes within those communities. Overall, universities contribute to society in a range of ways, both in terms of supporting economic development and well-being, and by fostering civic and democratic values.

The societal role, relevance and impact of universities is, therefore, neither a new concern nor a new phenomenon. However, an important distinction must be made 'between the idea of universities as having benefits for their sponsor society, and universities engaging *with society* to deliver those benefits' (Benneworth, 2018, p. 20; emphasis added). Despite the range of societal benefits that universities bring, the perception that universities are 'ivory towers' – elite institutions that are isolated from their societal contexts, both physically and in terms of the focus of their research and teaching – has persisted. This

perception has contributed to the mounting pressure on universities from the late-20th century to develop their third mission and to intensify activities that contribute to societal impact, in cooperation with external stakeholders.

The rise of the third mission

Since the Second World War, universities have increasingly needed to justify their cost to the taxpayer by demonstrating their wider societal and economic impact of their research (Guston and Keniston, 1994; Guston 2000). This trend has been especially prominent since the 1980s, with an emphasis on the need for universities to support economic growth by taking an active role in national innovation systems (Zomer and Benneworth, 2011; van Vught, 2009). In parallel with this has come the emergence of what Gibbons et al. (1996) referred to as the 'Mode 2' approach to research. The term describes the interdisciplinary and practical application of science to solve 'real-world' problems, giving increased prominence and legitimacy to use-inspired research, which was previously regarded as less valuable (and prestigious) than fundamental research. This development also placed pressure on universities both to open up to society and to cope with competition from new (non-university) research institutions. (1995, 2000) went further, describing this trend as a major paradigm shift in the role of universities in addressing concrete economic and social problems. According to the triple-helix' framework laid out by the authors, universities are crucial actors in regional development, driving innovation via systematic cooperation with government and industry in the production, transfer and application of knowledge, with an emphasis on technology.

Although the third mission of higher education relates to its contribution to society in its broadest sense, since the 1980s third mission policies and practices have primarily focused on economic development (Benneworth, 2018). In this context, the third mission is associated with activities such as the commercialisation of research, technology transfer, business engagement, entrepreneurial learning, stimulating entrepreneurship among staff, and providing incubators for start-ups (Benneworth and Jongbloed, 2010; Perkmann et al., 2013). This reflects a global trend towards policies dominated by the contribution of (higher) education to the knowledge economy (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Rizvi and Lindgard, 2009). The role of universities in supporting other societal needs, such as strengthening democratic values and civic engagement, addressing the needs of vulnerable social groups, contributing to cultural development, informing public policy and addressing large-scale social challenges, has not been nearly as prominent in the past few decades.

This lack of emphasis on community engagement over recent decades is not a result of such efforts being 'unknown territory' for higher education. Indeed, as the next section will illustrate, universities possess a rich history of community engagement. Even at policy level, discussions on societal engagement in its broadest sense were already on the agenda as early as 1982. In that year, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), already a highly influential player in the area of higher education policy, published a report entitled *The University and the Community: the Problems of Changing Relationships* (OECD-CERI, 1982). This publication explored the potential for universities to be engaged with 'the community' (understood in the context of the report as encompassing business, government, civil society organisations and society as a whole). According to Benneworth et al. (2009), the OECD report considered the contributions made by universities in an economic and a broader social context to be equally important, and 'did not foresee the fact that the economic side of engagement would come to greatly eclipse social engagement' (p. 20). The reasons why community engagement did not enjoy the same level of support as economic engagement will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

Origins of community engagement in higher education

The establishment of 'land-grant universities' in the United States in 1862 is often referenced as the first example of community engagement being stipulated in legislation relating to higher education. Land-grant universities were institutions established in predominantly rural areas to respond to the local needs of agricultural communities. In return for receiving land as an endowment, universities were required to serve local communities alongside their core teaching and research roles, through outreach, knowledge exchange, and support for regional development (Boyer, 1990; Goddard and Pukka, 2008; Benneworth [ed.], 2013). Land-grant universities gave rise to the concept of 'service' in higher education (understood as public service and service to the community), which has since become a central tenet of U.S. higher education alongside teaching and research (Ward, 2003; Scott, 2006). Since the 1980s, the U.S. has seen a major revival of the service mission among universities. This has evolved into a growing movement to increase community engagement led by a national university network, Campus Compact (Benson et al., 2017).

A lesser-known chapter in the history of community engagement in higher education comes from Latin America (Benneworth, 2018), where social responsibility has been a central feature of universities for more than a century. Argentina's Córdoba Reform of 1918 called for a 'new university', which was defined by its social function and its concern for national issues (Tunnermann, 1998 in Appe et al., 2017). The third mission of universities was defined in terms of their links with local communities. Outreach and solidarity were the cornerstones of universities' contribution to societal transformation – so much so that these 'strong ties were incorporated into university missions and are an inextricable part of their ethos' (Mora et al., 2018, p. 524). Community engagement remains a significant strand in higher education systems across Latin America to this day, supported by numerous national policies and programmes. For example, compulsory community work has long been an integral part of study programmes in countries such as Mexico and Costa Rica, while several national-level initiatives have been put in place over the last 15 years to further support community-based learning in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Venezuela (Tapia, 2018).

In recent decades, no equivalent movement to strengthen community engagement in higher education has developed in Europe. However, recent trends suggest that an opportunity now exists to place community engagement on the higher education policy agenda.

1.2. An emerging community engagement policy agenda in the 21st century

Since the early 2000s, repeated calls have been made for a 're-engagement of the university in helping to tackle the great challenges facing societies and local communities' (Pinheiro, Langa and Pautsits, 2015; p.1). Such calls have propelled the third mission to the forefront of policy discussions. In order to understand this trend, it is necessary to consider a range of factors that have changed since the paradigm of the knowledge economy emerged to dominate public policy over the last 30 years. Despite the promise of the global knowledge economy to benefit societies as a whole, in practice the gap between rich and poor continues to widen worldwide, with economic growth disproportionately benefiting higher income groups (OECD, 2015). Income inequality in turn gives rise to a range of other social and political concerns, including a breakdown in social cohesion, declining trust toward national and European political institutions, and a rise in populist attitudes – trends that have been further exacerbated by the financial crisis of 2008 (OECD, 2013; Algan et al., 2017). Adding to this, issues such as climate change, migration and ageing societies have become increasingly prominent societal 'grand challenges' that need to be addressed in a global context.

Higher education is inextricably linked to the trends described above. On the one hand, universities can clearly play a crucial role in mobilising their knowledge resources to address pressing societal challenges. On the other hand, universities are threatened by declining public trust with regard to their legitimacy (being perceived as 'ivory towers') and their impartiality as experts – a trend reflected in phenomena such as 'science denial' and 'expert rejection' (Gauchart, 2012; Rosenau, 2012; Benneworth, 2009). For all these reasons, the engagement of universities with their external communities to address societal challenges is no longer a trivial policy concern.

These developments have been reflected in a gradual shift in priorities, policies and initiatives at international, European and national levels. These encompass both 'top-down' policymaking initiatives to support a broader understanding of universities' contribution to society (including prominent initiatives to support community engagement), and 'bottom-up' initiatives by university networks and other stakeholders to support and strengthen community engagement in higher education.

International initiatives

At intergovernmental level, a number of **United Nations** initiatives have helped to place the role of universities to respond to societal needs higher up on the policy agenda. In 2009, UNESCO's communique from the World Conference on Higher Education strongly emphasised the principle of universities' social responsibility, describing higher education as a 'major force in building an inclusive and diverse knowledge society and advancing research, innovation and creativity' (p. 4). In 2012, UNESCO launched the UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education to support policymakers and practitioners in strengthening community-university research partnerships globally (UNESCO CBRSR, n.d.). Perhaps most significantly, the UN's *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted in 2015, set targets for countries and territories in both the developed and developing world, related to 'ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030'. Universities have been recognised as playing a key role in contributing to these sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Salmi, 2016; GUNI, 2019). One indicator of the extent to which this agenda has been embraced by universities is that an influential source of global university league tables decided to develop a ranking based on universities' performance in addressing SDGs (Times Higher Education, n.d.) – although this initiative has been met with some scepticism, based on both a critique of this methodology and on the questionable value of ranking universities according their societal impact (Curry, 2019; Hazelkorn, 2019).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**) also put the issue of universities' broader contribution to society, beyond a narrow economic focus, back on the agenda through its 2007 report *Higher Education and Regions: Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged* (OECD, 2007). The report argues that universities could play a stronger role not only in the economic development of their regions, but also in their cultural and social development. This perspective was echoed in a more recent report, *Benchmarking Performance in Higher Education* (OECD, 2019), which includes a special chapter on universities' 'engagement with the wider world', in which community engagement features prominently.

European Union initiatives

At **European Union** level, the policy framework of the Lisbon Strategy (2000-2010), with its ambitious goal of making the EU the world's most competitive economy by 2010, resulted in a heavy emphasis being placed on the role of universities in contributing to the economy by developing human capital, cooperating with business and driving innovation

(European Commission, 2003). The subsequent EU2020 Strategy, drafted in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, paved the way for a more holistic framing of societal development, reflected in both the EU's science and higher education policies. The EU's initial (post-Lisbon) policy framework for higher education (*The Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education* – European Commission, 2011) still adopted an economic focus with regard to the role of universities: 'quality and relevance' in higher education focused on producing graduates adapted to the needs of the labour market, while university engagement was framed only in terms of linking the 'knowledge triangle' of education, research and business. However, the subsequent *Renewed Agenda for Higher Education* (European Commission, 2017a) became the first EU policy document to prioritise broader societal engagement by universities. One of the four priorities of the Renewed Agenda was 'Building inclusive and connected HE systems'. This priority clearly reflects a community engagement angle that is distinct from innovation and entrepreneurship, which are covered under a separate priority. Echoing the concerns listed in the analysis above, the Renewed Agenda notes that 'higher education institutions are not ivory towers, but civic-minded learning communities connected to their communities' (p. 6). It goes on to describe the kind of engagement that could achieve this connection:

'Some institutions are developing their profile as 'civic universities' 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. (...) HEIs should be engaged in the development of their cities and regions, whether through contributing to development strategies, cooperation with businesses, the public and voluntary sectors or supporting public dialogue about societal issues...' (p. 7)

In the area of research, the EU's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation also took a step towards addressing societal needs. As a whole, Horizon 2020 focuses on addressing seven 'grand challenges' faced by European society. As part of its programme, Horizon 2020 included an entire programme entitled *Science with and for Society* (SwafS), whose actions included supporting open science, citizen science and responsible research and innovation. The concept of responsible research and innovation (RRI) is of particular significance because it is based on ensuring cooperation between researchers, citizens, policy makers, business and civil society organisations, in order to better align research and innovation and their outcomes with the values, needs and expectations of society, with the aim of fostering inclusive and sustainable research and innovation (European Commission, 2017.b). RRI focuses on six priority areas: public engagement, gender equality, science education, open access, ethics and governance. Citizen science represents another important strand of activity that is specifically supported by Horizon 2020 within SwafS. Citizen science refers to the involvement of citizens in the research process as observers, funders or participants in data collection and analysis. Finally, within the field of science education the European Commission has promoted the 'STEM to STEAM' approach, which links together scientific inquiry, the arts and innovation. This is achieved through the involvement of various societal actors in curricular design, learning and teaching (European Commission, 2015).

The issue of 'engagement' in higher education has also been addressed by the European Economic and Social Committee, whose 2016 opinion *Engaged universities shaping Europe* (EESC, 2016) mentioned the importance to the development of Europe of balancing both 'entrepreneurial and civic universities'.

National initiatives

In an analysis of eight national higher education systems from four continents (Europe, North America, South America and Australia), Benneworth et al. (2009) identified the

following trends in relation to the forms community engagement takes in different contexts, and the relationship between engagement and national higher education policies:

- Engagement was a common characteristic of all the higher education systems examined, 'even those in which there is seemingly an emphasis on detachment and excellence' (p. 67) and in 'none of the eight national systems surveyed have universities been either detached 'ivory towers' or national 'graduate factories'.
- The activities considered to be 'engagement' vary widely between countries, and the authors identified different 'cultures of engagement' in Anglo-American, Germanic, and Hispanic national contexts.
- Universities themselves played an active role in societal engagement, rather than merely reacting to top-down pressures.
- Despite the problems involved in defining measurable indicators of engagement (outlined further in Chapter 4 of this report), governments have been able to develop other policy instruments that help to stimulate engagement.

A more recent international analysis by Maasen et al. (2019), which covers Canada/Ontario, Chile, Germany, Japan, South Africa and the UK, confirms the increasing prominence of 'engagement' in higher education. Nevertheless, the engagement in question still tends to have a strong economic focus, while community engagement is less visible in governmental policy. With the exception of a few examples, national policy and funding to support broader societal engagement activities is lacking (p. 10), meaning that such initiatives are mostly left to universities themselves.

Looking more closely at developments in Europe, however, a number of country-specific measures can be identified that indicate an emerging policy agenda that supports community engagement in higher education across the continent.

The **United Kingdom** has arguably led the way in Europe in terms of developing policies and measures to support universities' contribution to societal needs, with the following measures being the most prominent:

- The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE): Since 2008, the NCCPE has acted as a national structure funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust. The aim of the NCCPE is to 'create a culture within UK higher education where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels, and for students' (NCCPE, n.d.[a]). The NCCPE supports universities via activities such as training, consultancy, networking and providing self-assessment and learning tools.
- Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research: Led by Research Councils UK, this policy statement signed in 2010 by all national agencies in research and higher education in the UK (and supported by all stakeholders) presented a shared vision and objectives for public engagement, as well as a commitment to support public engagement activities through funding projects and by supporting the NCCPE (Research Councils UK, 2010).
- The Research Excellence Framework (REF): In place since 2014, the REF has revolutionised the approach to research assessment in the UK by encompassing not only the quality of research outputs but also their societal impact. The impact of research is defined as: 'an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia' (UK Research and Innovation [UKRI], n.d.). Impact currently counts for 20% of the overall assessment. This figure will increase to 25% in the new REF in 2021 (REF, n.d.), meaning that there is a significant financial incentive for universities to engage with society.

- The Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF): The UK is currently in the process of developing the KEF to measure both university-business collaboration and knowledge exchange with other stakeholders, including through community engagement. Building on data from the existing Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey and other sources, the KEF will include both metrics and good-practice case studies (HEFCE, 2017).

Ireland has also adopted a range of legislation, policies and strategies that provide levers to strengthen community engagement in higher education. Ireland's *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (Department of Education and Skills, 2011) refers to 'engagement' as one of the three core roles of higher education, alongside teaching and research. Engagement in this context includes how the higher education system addresses its responsibilities towards society, including business, local communities, the education sector as a whole, and the international community. As part of the strategy, Ireland has developed the *Higher Education System Performance Framework*, the latest version of which (for 2018-2020) emphasises that Irish Government policy 'not only seeks engagement with the goal of economic innovation, but also broader community engagement' (HEA, 2018, p. 11). The framework requires that higher education institutions define key performance indicators (KPIs) in relation to their specific engagement missions. The more recent *Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework* also foresees an important role for universities in local and regional development, as well as in meeting sustainable development goals (Government of Ireland, 2019).

Although no comprehensive review exists of national policies across Europe in relation to universities' contributions to society more generally (or community engagement in higher education specifically), the following examples suggest that interest in this policy agenda is growing:

- In the **Netherlands**, the *Strategic Agenda for Higher Education and Research 2015-25* encourages the connecting of students with external community partners through joint research projects. The national 'City Deal' scheme aims to find solutions to social challenges in cities through the large-scale involvement of businesses, researchers, lecturers and students. Since 2010, the Netherlands has also developed a Valorisation Programme to incentivise knowledge transfer between universities and companies, institutes, civil society organisations, as well as local and regional governments – although the programme places an emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship (OECD, 2019).
- In **Spain**, the *University Strategy 2015* (Gobierno de España, 2015) states that it is 'essential to strengthen the social responsibility of universities' (p. 27), and includes the objective of 'developing a university model based on the third mission, which provides a balance between social development and economic development' (p. 39, translated by the author of this report).
- In **Croatia** and **Lithuania**, although no national policy documents specifically refer to community engagement in higher education, national priorities set in the European Social Funds have included ensuring funding for the launching of community-based learning initiatives in higher education (Cayuela et al., 2020), thus effectively initiating community engagement within higher education systems that had little previous track record of such activities.

These examples do not imply that community engagement is becoming a priority across all EU Member States. Indeed, a recent study from **Germany** indicates that although most universities emphasise the third mission in their mission statements, the focus of their activities is overwhelmingly on economic impact and knowledge/technology transfer, with much less attention paid to other ways means of engaging with society (Berghaeuser and

Hoelscher, 2019). Nevertheless, the examples above do indicate the gradual emergence of community engagement as an area of increasing interest to policymakers.

University-led and stakeholder-led initiatives

In addition to policy initiatives, the last 20 years have seen a growing trend among university networks and other stakeholders of bottom-up initiatives to strengthen community engagement in higher education. A detailed overview of global and European initiatives is included as Annex I to this report. The trends can be summarised as follows:

- Global university initiatives: Two major global university networks have emerged that support community engagement in higher education: the Global University Network for Innovation (affiliated to UNESCO), and the Talloires Network. Together, these networks involve more than 600 member organisations and support universities in better responding to their surrounding communities and to addressing societal needs.
- European university/stakeholder initiatives: In the last two years, several significant European-level initiatives have emerged that support community engagement in higher education. The first is the launch of the European project *Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education* (TEFCE), which aims to promote a new approach to assessing and supporting community engagement among European universities (Benneworth et al., 2018).³ The second is the establishment of the European Association of Service Learning in Higher Education, a network of 28 institutions and experts focusing on student placements in community-based organisations as an integral part of their studies. Thirdly, the topic of community engagement (framed as 'engagement' or 'societal engagement') has featured prominently in recent position papers by the League of European Research Universities (LERU, 2016), 2017, 2019) and has been the central topic of studies and initiatives during 2018 and 2019 by the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the Academic Cooperation Association. Finally, several of the new 'European University' alliances supported by the European Commission have made specific mention of connecting and engaging with citizens and local communities (see Annex I for more details).
- National university initiatives: In the last decade, 10 European countries have seen the establishment of university networks focused on various aspects of community engagement in higher education. These networks include Campus Engage (Ireland), the Spanish University Service-Learning Association, the German Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility, and the Italian Network of Service-Learning and Community Engagement (Cayuella et al., 2020). See Box I.1 in Annex I for examples of activities within two such networks.

1.3. The impact of COVID-19 on community engagement in higher education

The implications of the COVID-19 crisis are enormous, both for the future of our societies and for the future of higher education. Linking the two together, the question of how universities can contribute to social and economic recovery will be at the top of policymakers' agendas in the years to come. The current COVID-19 crisis arguably makes the topic of community engagement more important than ever.

³ The author of this analytical report is the coordinator of the TEFCE project and this report is also informed by the findings of the TEFCE project.

During the COVID-19 crisis, stories quickly emerged of how universities around the world had mobilised their knowledge and resources to rapidly respond to the crisis by addressing a range of different societal needs. Examples from Europe, the US and Africa have shown universities responded by undertaking research in pursuit of a vaccine, supplying COVID-19 testing machines, providing physical space and facilities to local hospitals for the relocation of patients, or producing personal protective equipment for medical staff (Jarvis, 29 March 2020; Shaker and Plater, 29 April 2020; Abbey et al., 23 April 2020). Universities around the world, such as Johns Hopkins University's Coronavirus Resource Center, have provided crucial international-level analyses of the spread of the virus and the effectiveness of government responses. Students have also played an important part through volunteering initiatives (Sursock, 16 May 2020).

According to a survey of 424 universities from 109 countries carried out by the International Association of Universities (Marinoni, van't Land, and Jensen, 2020), the COVID-19 crisis has impacted community engagement in both positive and negative ways.

- More than half of universities surveyed had carried out community engagement activities specifically related to COVID-19. Activities included medical interventions (university hospitals providing care for patients; students and staff providing mobile care, medical advice and support), science communication activities and an increasing level of community actions
- Almost half of all universities surveyed had *increased* their community engagement as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. However, for almost a third of universities the impact of COVID-19 had been negative, as it decreased their engagement activities.
- Although only 41% of universities surveyed were involved in COVID-19 research, at almost all of them, researchers contributed to public policy developments.

In the coming years, policymakers and university leaders will have to take into account the long-term implications of the COVID-19 crisis on universities' external communities in their localities and regions. Some study programmes – and, indeed, institutions – may face permanent closure, resulting in the loss of skills and human capital for the local region and the loss of 'higher education's broader contributions to the local and national civic communities and culture, including provision of continuing education, community meeting spaces, centres for performance and visual arts, etc.' (World Bank, 2020).

On another level, the major societal challenges referred to in this report will not only remain, but will be further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Thus, universities will play an increasingly important role in contributing to effective responses to these challenges. Addressing climate change and the sustainable development goals will remain more important than ever to in order to achieve equitable social and economic recovery. At a European level, challenges have been documented in relation to income inequality, social cohesion, declining trust towards political institutions and the rise of populist attitudes (OECD, 2013; Algan et al., 2017). In contributing to solutions to these challenges, universities will need to engage directly with their communities in order to identify viable solutions and counter the threat of 'science denial' and 'expert rejection' (Gauchart, 2012; Rosenau, 2012; Benneworth, 2009).

Numerous researchers, experts and institutions have already responded to the COVID-19 crisis by emphasising why community engagement in higher education should represent a key principle in the post-crisis recovery period:

- Harkavy et al. (18 April 2020) noted how the civic spirit and social solidarity shown by universities during the COVID-19 crisis 'needs to extend beyond the COVID-19 crisis and become higher education's defining characteristic', and that 'to create a better post-COVID-19 world requires democratic civic universities dedicated to

producing knowledge and educating ethical, empathetic students for just and sustainable democratic societies.’

- The Open Society University Network and the Talloires Network established a joint initiative entitled Communities of Virtual Alliance & Inter-Dependence (COV-AID), demonstrating how civically engaged universities worldwide are responding quickly and positively to the COVID-19 global pandemic.⁴
- Schwartz (4 May 2020) argues that universities must increasingly focus their teaching and research on responding directly to environmental threats and social crises (such as COVID-19). He provides a testimonial on how the Tulane University (USA) transformed its institutional policies, practices and culture in response to Hurricane Katrina in 2004.
- Sursock (16 May 2020) notes that, after the crisis universities will have to ‘reset their priorities in a context in which civic engagement will become ever more pressing and urgent for Europe and for democratic societies worldwide’.

The arguments presented in this report with regard to the dimensions, good practices and benefits of community engagement will be relevant to all policymakers and university leaders developing plans for the recovery and development of higher education in the post-COVID-19 period.

1.4. Conclusions

Universities have always been closely intertwined with their host societies. They already contribute to addressing a broad range of societal needs simply by virtue of being located in a given area. Ample evidence also exists that universities in various contexts have, throughout their history, played a more proactive role in developing solutions to societal challenges by engaging with their external communities.

The pressure for universities to *demonstrate* how they contribute to society is a more recent development, with this contribution now being defined as the ‘third mission’ of higher education. Although policy has previously placed a strong emphasis on the economic role of universities, this focus is changing. Universities are now expected to play a role in addressing a range of societal needs, from so-called ‘grand challenges’ (such as climate change, ageing and migration) to local-level social development. This idea has gained traction not only at the top-down level of supranational policies (of the EU, OECD and UN), but also through national-level policies and bottom-up initiatives by university networks and other stakeholders, including in Europe. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 is likely to further increase calls for universities to respond quickly and effectively to societal needs over the coming years. There is thus an increasing need for a more systematic approach to supporting community engagement in higher education in Europe.

The chapters that follow will define what is meant by community engagement, as well as providing examples of good practices. They will also consider how to further develop this agenda in Europe.

⁴ For more information, see: <https://talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/osun-tn-partnership/>

Chapter 2. Key concepts: defining community engagement

The previous chapter demonstrated that interactions between universities and society are not a novelty in themselves, and that since the 1980s increasing attention has been given to the topic via debates about the 'third mission' of higher education. What arguably *is* a novelty is the re-emergence and increasingly widespread use of the concept of engagement as a way of 'articulating and structuring how higher education interacts and organises its relationships with society' (Hazelkorn, 2016, p. 66).

But what exactly do we mean by *community* engagement? For those who are new to the area, the term may carry associations that are limited to community service, charitable actions and generally ensuring 'good neighbourliness' between a university and its immediate local community. The concept is in fact much broader in scope and meaning – so much so that it is notoriously difficult to define and open to innumerable interpretations. This chapter suggests how best to approach and define the concept of community engagement. In addition, since clarity of language is especially important in policymaking, the chapter distinguishes the different terminology used to refer to community engagement (i.e. civic, public, regional and social/societal engagement) and clarifies how community engagement relates to other parallel reform initiatives that focus on 'relevance' and 'impact' of higher education and research.

2.1. Towards a flexible definition of community engagement

The challenges of defining community engagement

The best summary of the difficulties faced in defining community engagement is provided by Sandmann (2008; p. 101), who refers to the problem as being in a state of 'definitional anarchy'. Cuthill (2011) finds as many as 48 different terms used to refer to community engagement in higher education, with little consensus regarding a common definition or set of principles (Culum, 2018). Benneworth (2013) refers to this as one of the central problems facing community engagement: it is often not recognised as concept because it takes place in a range of ways in different contexts (from a multitude of university contexts to diverse academic disciplines). The result is that universities may be involved in activities that they would not associate with the label of 'community engagement' (Jongbloed and Benneworth, 2013; McIlrath, 2014).

Instead of attempting to resolve this definitional impasse, some authors have argued that the search for a fixed definition and set of indicators of community engagement may be counterproductive. Benneworth (2018) argues that, due to the broad range of possible engagement activities and approaches, 'in proposing any definition there is a risk of drawing hard lines around which activities do or do not count, which is not useful because there is always an exception that proves the rule, rendering the definition unsatisfactory' (p. 23). Instead, a possible solution is to adopt an intentionally broad definition that allows for various interpretations and avoids excluding any activities that link universities with society. The following short and simple definition is put forward by Benneworth (2018, p. 17):

'Community engagement is a process whereby universities engage with external organisations to undertake joint activities that can be mutually beneficial, even if each side benefits in a different way.'

This definition reflects a point that is strongly emphasised in the literature: that the principle of mutual benefit is central to community engagement (Sandmann, 2008; Benneworth et al., 2009; Goddard et al., 2016; Brown University, n.d.; Benneworth et al.,

2018; NCCPE, n.d.[b]). This firmly moves community engagement away from one-directional notions such as the university acting as an enlightened 'problem-solver' or providing charitable donations to the community out of a sense of corporate social responsibility. Instead, community engagement frames the role of the community as being that of a partner whose knowledge and experience can benefit the university by enriching the knowledge process (whether in field of teaching or research). The university, meanwhile, becomes a partner to the community in responding to the specific challenges or needs they encounter (Benneworth, 2018).

This concise definition nevertheless requires additional unpacking in order to understand what types of activities, which communities and what societal needs are involved. These questions will now be looked at in turn.

2.2. Mapping the types of activities, communities and societal needs addressed through community engagement

Types of activities

Before we present a possible typology of community engagement activities, it should be underlined that the literature is virtually unanimous in declaring that genuine community engagement involves embedding partnerships with external communities into the core activities of the university. In other words, while community engagement may involve activities that academic staff and students take on in addition to their university obligations, community engagement only becomes sustainable once it is integrated into teaching, research and university structures and policies (Holland, 1997; Kellogg Commission, 1999; Hollander, Saltmarsh and Zlotkowski, 2001; Watson, 2007; Garlic and Langworthy, 2008; Furco et al., 2009; Goddard et al., 2016; Benneworth et al., 2018).

Within the EU-funded project *Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education* (TEFCE), comprehensive reviews were carried out on over 60 existing definitions, classifications, typologies and assessment frameworks for community engagement (Ćulum, 2018;⁵ Farnell and Šćukanec, 2018⁶). Based on these reviews, the TEFCE project proposed five thematic dimensions within which community engagement activities can take place:

- Teaching and learning (study programmes developed to address societal needs; students involved in community-based learning; the inclusion of community groups in the planning and delivery of teaching).
- Research (research into the societal needs of external communities; participatory research implemented in partnership with community groups).
- Service and knowledge exchange (academic staff involvement in public service, consultancy and capacity-building among community groups).
- Student initiatives (the involvement of student organisations/initiatives in community engagement; support for student initiatives for community engagement by university).
- University-level engagement (openness and accessibility of university facilities/services and knowledge resources; formal partnerships with community groups).

⁵ Among the prominent sources reviewed were: OECD-CERI (1982); Benneworth et al., 2009; Doberneck, Glass and Schweitzer (2010); Hart, Northmore and Gerhardt (2009); Hazelkorn (2016); Bowen et al. (2010); Molas-Gallart et al. (2002).

⁶ Among the prominent assessment frameworks reviewed were: Hollander, Saltmarsh and Zlotkowski (2001); Holland (1997); Watson (2007); Furco et al. (2009); Garlick and Langworthy (2008); Brown University (n.d.).

The TEFCE project also identifies two dimensions that characterise an institutional environment within the university that is conducive to community engagement:

- Supportive policies and measures (strategies and plans for community engagement; formal recognition of achievements in community engagement; support structure for community engagement, e.g. committee, office or staff)
- Supportive academic staff (acceptance of community engagement by academic staff).

Types of communities

In order to determine what 'communities' are implied by the term community engagement, and precisely what are the societal needs of those communities that need to be addressed, we must return to the aforementioned 'definitional anarchy' related to community engagement. Namely, there is no clear or commonly accepted definition of what is meant by community engagement and who the stakeholders of such engagement actually are (Hazelkorn, 2016; p.45); the answer to this question depends entirely on which definition of the term is adopted. Although there is little value in analysing the differences between all possible definitions of community engagement, it is useful to examine the varying uses of the term 'engagement' in order to identify what – if any – are the differences and similarities in the ways in which the concept of community is framed.

Box 2.1 below provides an overview and brief description of some of the most commonly used terms: community engagement, civic engagement, public engagement, regional engagement, and social/societal engagement.

Box 2.1: Differentiating commonly used terminology for engagement	
Community engagement	This term is widely used both in the literature and in practice. The term is often used, as in this report, to refer to engagement with a broad range of external stakeholders on a broad range of issues (e.g. in the Carnegie Classification of Community Engagement in Higher Education – Brown University, n.d.; or in Benneworth et al., 2018). However, some have argued that the term can imply having a stronger emphasis on issues of social justice and engagement with disadvantaged groups in society (Hazelkorn, 2016; Benneworth (Ed.), 2013).
Civic engagement	This term is also widely used in the literature and in practice (e.g. McIllrath and Mac Labhrainn, 2007), and is used synonymously with community engagement. Nevertheless, the term 'civic' does imply a focus on promoting active citizenship and democratic values. This can refer both to instilling these values among students (Welch, 2012) but also to the role of the university in espousing these values as an institution (Barnett, 2012) within its civic mission. The term 'civic university' has re-emerged recently (Goddard, 2009; Goddard et al., 2016), but this term has taken on a distinct meaning (which is discussed in the next section).
Public engagement	This term is also widely used in the literature, although it has been used in different contexts. The term initially emerged in the 1990s from the field of science, as part of the transition from promoting passive 'public understanding of science' to active 'public engagement with science' (Culum, 2017; Stilgoe, Lock and Wilsdon, 2014). The term has since been applied across higher education as a whole, particularly in the UK (NCCPE, n.d.[a]). Although the term appears to refer to the 'general public', in most instances it is in fact much closer to the definition of community engagement proposed in this report, involving multiple 'publics' (Stilgoe, Lock and Wilsdon, 2014; NCCPE, n.d.[c]) and addressing multiple societal needs.
Regional engagement	Also this term is widely used in the literature, and overlaps in a number of ways with the previous terms, regional engagement arguably has two distinctive features that differentiate it from the previous examples. First, it is specifically place-based in its focus, whereas the other terms can include local, national and

	international dimensions. Second, discussions regarding the regional role of higher education have a much stronger emphasis on regional economic development and innovation, rather than on other societal needs (see e.g. Benneworth and Sanderson, 2009; Edwards et al., 2017; Reichert, 2019). Nevertheless, some discussions on regional engagement are moving towards holistic approaches that incorporate broader notions of societal development extending beyond the economic sphere (e.g. Goddard and Pukka, 2008).
Social / Societal engagement	Of all the terms presented, this term is used only sporadically in the literature. Its meaning ranges from a general reference to external communities of the university (e.g. Maassen et al. 2019; Benneworth and Osborne, 2014; OECD, 2017), to a predominant focus on local communities and vulnerable groups (e.g. Mora et al., 2017, in the context of Latin America).
Other terms	Civic and community engagement (Watson, 2007) Public and community engagement (Furco, 2010)

Surprisingly, few *substantial* differences exist between the above terms. All of the types of engagement referred to share the same standpoint that universities should connect with a range of external stakeholders (in a range of different ways) in order to contribute to addressing a societal need. Where differences can be distinguished between the terms, they relate to the primary focus and societal objective of the engagement that is being referred to.

Types of societal needs

A helpful framework to differentiate between distinct ways of framing community engagement is that elaborated by Hazelkorn (2016), which categorises different models of engagement based on distinct societal objectives:

- The social justice model focuses on addressing social disadvantage in surrounding communities and emphasises activities such as ensuring equal access to university, community-based learning for students, community-based research and volunteering by academic staff, and other activities aimed at community empowerment.
- The economic development model emphasises the traditional third mission focus on economic growth, innovation, entrepreneurship and business engagement (as described in Chapter 1).
- The public good model proposed by Hazelkorn provides a holistic 'middle ground' between the two approaches proposed above. This model focuses on contributing to community development and revitalisation activities, both from an economic and a non-economic perspective, with a strong 'place-based' emphasis on the role of the university in supporting its local and regional environment.

The value of Hazelkorn's framework is that it acknowledges that different definitions of engagement's societal objectives will result in different communities being identified as the university's primary partners. This in turn leads to different responses within the institution and by policy. For example, engagement that focuses on economic development will prioritise business and innovation communities; engagement with an explicit social justice agenda will create partnerships with disadvantaged communities; and other forms of engagement may address parallel objectives and engage with diverse communities. Whether such engagement is labelled as 'community', 'civic', 'public' or any other term is ultimately immaterial: it is always the *context* that will determine the definition of 'community'.

Benneworth et al. (2018) argue that the range of possible objectives, and the range of communities with which engagement occurs, should not represent an obstacle to viewing

community engagement as a single, overarching concept. Instead, they argue that it is more productive to adopt a broad approach which recognises that universities can engage in parallel with different communities to address different kinds of societal objectives.

This report employs the definition developed by TEFCE project, which defines the term community as 'communities of place, identity or interest' (Farnell et al., forthcoming). In adopting such a definition, organisations from government, business and civil society are all considered external communities of the university, as are the general population in the university's proximity or region. Accordingly, authentic community engagement involves going beyond partnerships solely with large businesses and national governmental institutions. Instead, community engagement should involve engaging in a balanced way with a wide range of communities. In particular, these include groups that lack the resources to engage easily with universities, such as NGOs, social enterprises, cultural organisations, schools, local governments and disadvantaged groups (Benneworth et al., 2018). Finally, it should be noted that the term 'community' is not necessarily limited to the local level. Although it is easier to sustain productive relationships with partners that are geographical proximate, community engagement can also have regional, national and international dimensions (Farnell et al., forthcoming).

Similarly, the TEFCE project proposes a broad definition of which 'societal needs' can be addressed through community engagement. This definition includes all political, economic, cultural, social, technological and environmental factors that can influence the quality of life in a society. Following the logic outlined above regarding the need to engage with a range of communities, the types of societal needs that are addressed by universities also reflect different levels of engagement. At a basic level, universities prepare graduates with the skills needed for the labour market, and can directly respond to the needs of business and of the public sector. In engaging with communities to address 'grand challenges' (e.g. climate change, ageing, migration) and the needs of harder-to-reach and vulnerable groups (Farnell et al., forthcoming), universities demonstrate a more developed level of engagement.

2.3. Untangling other related terms and concepts

Service and knowledge exchange

'Service' and 'knowledge exchange' in higher education are terms that are closely related to community engagement, and may sometimes be used interchangeably with it. However, in the typology of community engagement proposed above (based on Farnell et al., forthcoming), service and knowledge exchange are considered as being *dimensions* of community engagement rather than synonyms for it; the reasons for this are presented below.

The concept of 'service' (as noted in Chapter 1) has been a central tenet of U.S. higher education since the 19th century, alongside teaching and research (Boyer, 1990). Although 'service' has predominantly referred to service to the profession (e.g. sitting on committees, editorial boards etc.), it is now understood as universities providing various forms of public service to the community (Ward, 2003; Scott, 2006). Service usually involves 'outreach and extension' programmes. These can involve voluntary work, consultancy to communities or contributing to public policy development. One characteristic of service, however, is that it has been defined as 'a one-way process in which the university transfers its expertise to key constituents' (Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 1999, p. 9). For this reason, since the late 1990s, researchers and universities in the U.S. have argued for an expansion of the traditional concept of service that embraces the term 'engagement', emphasising stronger

and more mutually beneficial partnerships with communities (Sandmann, 2008; Kellogg Commission, 1999).

The concept of knowledge exchange can be defined as a process involving several parties that can 'generate, share and/or use knowledge through various methods appropriate to the context, purpose, and participants involved', which is 'increasingly being recognised as key to facilitating social, environmental and economic impact of research' (Fazey et al., 2013). In the context of higher education, the concept specifically relates to the two-way exchange of knowledge between universities and non-academic communities. In practice, however, much of the research on knowledge exchange has focused on engagement with the private business sector (Hughes and Kiston, 2012). Despite increasing recognition that knowledge exchange goes beyond the economic sphere – and that universities do, in fact, engage in significant knowledge exchange with both the public sector and civil society (Hughes and Kiston, 2012) – illustrations of knowledge exchange usually relate to economically relevant knowledge 'spillovers' such as commercialisation, spin-offs, consultancy, etc. (e.g. in Benneworth and Sanderson, 2009).

One way of linking both service and knowledge exchange to the concept of community engagement was proposed by Benneworth et al. (2009), who included both knowledge exchange and service as two of the four types of community engagement activities, in addition to teaching and engaged research. Knowledge exchange activities in this case include, for example, 'consultancy for a hard-to-reach group as a client' or 'public funded knowledge exchange projects', whereas service includes making 'universities facilities publicly available' or 'contributing to the civic life of the region' (p. 6). Farnell et al. (forthcoming) also adopt this definition, combining the terms into a single dimension of 'service and knowledge exchange' that covers activities carried out by academic staff in addition to their teaching and research activities.

The 'engaged' vs the 'civic' university

Whereas the previous definitions of community engagement describe its objectives, target groups and types of activities, other literature focuses on the institutional characteristics of community-engaged universities. The literature includes a combination of 'idealistic' works outlining visions as to why and how universities should engage with their communities (e.g. Bok, 1982; Barnett, 2002; Barnett, 2018), as well as more pragmatic works that propose frameworks to assist universities in the process of institutionalising community engagement (e.g. Holland, 1997; Hollander, Saltmarsh and Zlotkowski, 2001; Garlic and Langworthy, 2008; Furco et al., 2009;), and works that combine both approaches (e.g. Watson, 2007; Benneworth, 2013; Goddard et al., 2016).

Two terms that have enjoyed the most widespread use are the 'engaged university' (Watson, 2007; Benneworth, 2013; Kellogg Commission; 1999; NCCPE, n.d.[b]) and more recently the 'civic university' (Goddard et al., 2016; UPP Foundation, n.d.), which has since begun to appear in EU policy documents (European Commission, 2018; EESC, 2016).⁷ These terms have emerged partly as a response to the dominance of rhetoric concerning the 'entrepreneurial university' (Clark, 1998; Etzkowitz et al., 2008), which is oriented towards engagement with business and fostering innovation and economic development. Indeed, there almost appears to be a recognition that these terms represent two sides of the same 'engagement coin': Goddard et al. (2016) explicitly distinguish the civic university from the entrepreneurial university; while Kliewe et al. (2019) distinguish the 'engaged' and the 'entrepreneurial' university as two separate but closely related models, a view echoed in the relevant policy document of the EESC (2016) and in Edwards et al. (2017).

⁷ More terms such as the 'ecological university' (Barnett, 2002; Barnett, 2018), the 'socially responsible university' (GUNI, 2014; GUNI, 2017) and the 'responsible university' (Sørensen et al., 2019) have also emerged, but have not yet been widely adopted in policy documents or within the academic community.

With regard to the distinction between the 'civic' and the 'engaged' university, our conclusion is similar to that of the previous discussion on the various terms used to describe community engagement: there are far more similarities than differences.

- **Similarities:** Both concepts recognise the need for the university to rebalance its societal objectives to move beyond being an 'ivory tower' or a 'driver of economic growth' and to contribute in a broader and more active way to societal development. Both concepts also identify the need to engage directly with external communities and to embed engagement as a core activity of the institution, meaning that engagement is incorporated into teaching and research rather than as a peripheral third mission.
- **Differences:** The civic university is explicit about its 'place-based' nature: it is closely connected to its local and regional community. The civic university concept also defines itself as responding to the objective of 'the public good' rather than solely to economic development or social justice. While an engaged university could follow exactly the same path and thus be identical to this conception of the civic university, it could also choose a different path and focus on prioritising social inequalities, for example.

In conclusion, it may be more useful to approach the concepts of the engaged university and the civic university as being two variants of the same concept: an institution that places community engagement (in its broadest sense) at the core of its institutional culture.

2.4. Connecting engagement to 'accountability', 'relevance' and 'impact'

Accountability

The increasing interest in evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of universities in relation to the funding they receive (from governments and/or via tuition fees) has been 'one of the most profound changes in higher education during the last couple of decades' (Stensaker and Harvey, p. 1). This has resulted in an increase in external and internal accountability mechanisms in higher education, including monitoring schemes, quality audits, reporting and funding and governance initiatives. It has also resulted in the creation of supranational standards, guidelines and agencies specifically focusing on accountability in higher education.

The concept of accountability in higher education looks at a range of ways in which universities perform, in relation to what is expected of them by society. In practice, accountability in most countries is associated with quality assurance procedures, especially with institutional accreditation (Stensaker and Harvey, p. 246). This risks accountability being perceived by some as a primarily technical exercise. Others, meanwhile (as noted in Hazelkorn and Gibson, 2019), may even interpret accountability measures as a negative example of a neoliberal approach to the governance (and control) of higher education. A broader and more holistic understanding of accountability can reframe the debate as being one that seeks to find ways to determine how well universities contribute to 'the public good' (Calhoun, 2016; Hazelkorn and Gibson, 2019). This includes the ways in which universities address issues such as access/participation, costs/debt, graduate employability/unemployment and social/economic impact. Framed in this way, community engagement can become an integral part of accountability in higher education – as noted by Dee (2006, p. 134) and quoted in Hazelkorn and Gibson, (2019): 'governance systems advance the public good when institutions are engaged in a system of mutual obligation with the communities in which they are embedded.'

Two specific issues that fall within the scope of accountability in higher education, but which have also become prominent areas for activity and debate in themselves, are the 'relevance' and 'impact' of higher education. As we will now discuss, community engagement can be closely connected to both of these issues.

Relevance

Policy rhetoric regarding the relevance of higher education has tended to focus on labour market needs and the development of knowledge economies. This has been reflected in EU policy, where the phrase 'quality and relevance' has been used to refer to both preparing graduates for the labour market (European Commission, 2011) and to graduate employability (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018). More recently, relevance has been used to refer to a broader range of stakeholder expectations of higher education (OECD, 2017). A recent European Commission study (European Commission, 2018) framed the concept of the relevance of higher education as being embodied by three dimensions: ensuring the personal development of students; ensuring that graduates attain sustainable employment; and ensuring that graduates are active citizens.

From this description, it is clear that the concept of relevance focuses on the outcomes of higher education, and that relevance to the labour market remains a dominant feature. Nevertheless, community engagement clearly fits into the discussion on relevance by providing a platform to connect universities with their external communities, thereby contributing to the civic engagement and personal development of students (and potentially, although indirectly, contributing to their employability). Future discussions on the relevance of higher education could examine how universities foster positive outcomes for the external communities involved, as well as for society as a whole – which links us to the next key term to consider: impact.

Impact

In its generic definition, impact refers to the 'positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a (...) intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended' (OECD, 2002). There has been a significant increase in the attention paid to the impact of higher education and research. This has included national and regional initiatives to assess the overall impact of universities on society, primarily through their direct impact on the economy and by monetising the value of their non-economic activities (see, for example, *Delivering for Ireland: An Impact Assessment of Irish Universities* [IUA, 2019] or *Social Value of Public Universities in Catalonia* [ACUP, forthcoming]). However, the area in which discussions about impact have featured most prominently is in the assessment of the societal impact of research – so much so that the phenomenon is now referred to as the 'impact agenda' (LERU, 2018; McCowan, 2018). In the short space available, the following points can be made about the main challenges faced by attempts to measure the societal impact of research, and about the relationship between impact and engagement:

- Traditionally, research impact has been understood as academic impact demonstrated through tracking citations of a researcher's work in academic journals in a method known as 'bibliometrics', whereby articles, researchers and journals are assigned 'impact factors' depending on the numbers of citations. The widespread use of such metrics as a meaningful measure of impact has come under increasing criticism (e.g. Wilsdon et al., 2015).
- Today, the concept of research impact is increasingly used to refer to societal impact – that is, the impact of research on the non-academic community (McCowan, 2018).
- In her review of literature regarding the assessment of the societal impact of research, Bornmann (2013) demonstrates that in many countries there is significant

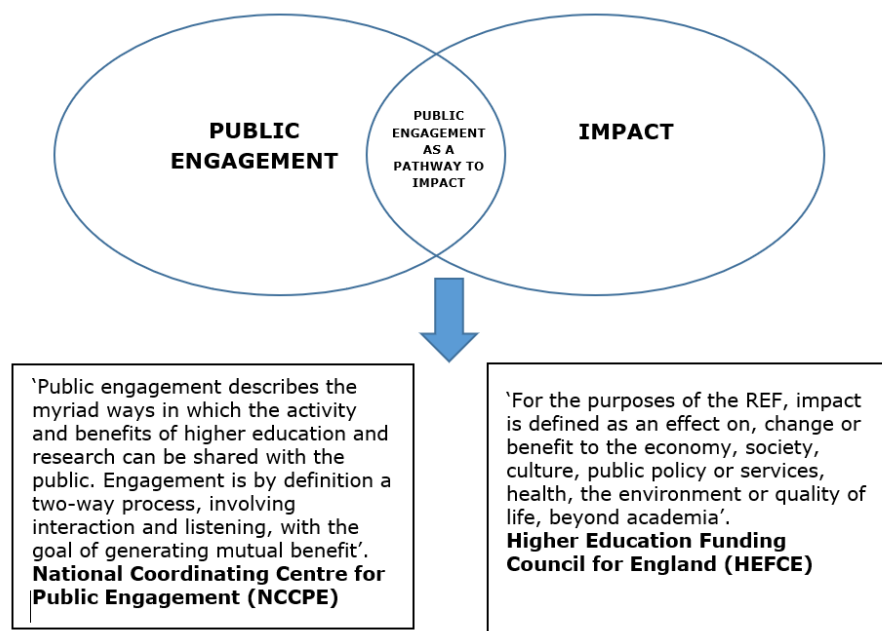
interest in assessing societal impact, and that a common approach has been to evaluate economic impact, for which there are many measurable indicators (e.g. numbers of patents, economic statistics). However, assessing broader societal impact (impact on social, cultural, political, and organisational spheres) has been, and remains, an intractable challenge. Few countries are clear about how to evaluate societal impact, especially with regard to the use of quantitative indicators – resulting in societal impact often being inferred rather than adequately demonstrated.

- In the face of these challenges to the measurement of impact, alternative approaches have been developed that focus on assessing impact through case studies. The most famous example is the UK's Research Excellence Framework (as mentioned in Chapter 1), which assess the impact of research on society through detailed case studies. In the Netherlands, another approach based on case studies, the SIAMPI project, has shown that the key to successful societal impact lies in the interactions between science and society: whenever there is a productive and highly-structured interaction between stakeholders and researchers, this usually results in societal impact (Spaapen and van Drooge, 2011; Bornmann, 2013; LERU, 2017).

So, although the question of how to assess the societal impact of both research and higher education as a whole is high on the policy agenda, it is not only unresolved, but the way in which it is carried out is also the subject of heated debate and opposition from parts of the academic community, for example in the UK (McCowan, 2018).

How does this notion of societal impact connect to our discussion on community engagement? The 'impact agenda' and the 'engagement agenda' arguably share the same goal, but approach it from two different angles and focus on two distinct phases in the achievement of that goal. Engagement is the *process* whereby universities connect with external stakeholders to address societal needs. Impact, meanwhile, is the *long-term outcome* of university activities aimed at addressing a given societal need. Of course, impact is a much broader term than engagement: universities have societal impacts that are not the result of engagement (e.g. through new scientific breakthroughs; through the indirect economic and social impacts of having a university in a given location; through helping to shape public discourse, etc.). In this respect, engagement can lead to impact, but is not a precondition for impact. Interestingly, however, what the literature tells us is that it may in fact be more effective and feasible to focus precisely on engagement ('productive interactions'), and then to qualitatively examine what impact(s) this leads to through case studies, rather than attempting to construct comprehensive quantitative indicators of the range of possible impacts that research (or a university as a whole) may have on society. The REF has explicitly voiced this connection, by framing public engagement as a 'pathway to impact' (UKRI, n.d.; REF, n.d.).

Figure 1: Linking public engagement and research impact⁸



2.5. Conclusions

This chapter argues that fundamental commonalities exist between the different approaches to defining community engagement. Although various terms exist to refer to engagement (including civic, public, regional and societal engagement), the common position in all these approaches is that universities play a crucial role in engaging in partnerships with their external communities in order to jointly address societal needs. Where these interpretations differ is in the way these different societal goals are prioritised, e.g. from regional economic development to addressing local challenges of social exclusion.

This report proposes to adopt community engagement as a common term for all kinds of partnerships between universities and their external communities. Based on the work of Benneworth et al. (2018) and Farnell et al. (forthcoming), the definition of community engagement can be summarised as follows:

- **'Community engagement'** occurs when universities engage with external communities to undertake joint activities that address societal needs, in a way that is mutually beneficial.
- **'Engagement'** is defined as the range of ways in which university staff, students and management interact with external communities in mutually beneficial ways, whether as a part of teaching and research, of joint projects and initiatives, or of university governance and management.
- **'Community'** is defined as all possible communities of place, identity or interest. Thus, it encompasses organisations from government, business and civil society, as well as citizens.
- **'Societal needs'** are defined as all political, economic, cultural, social, technological and environmental factors that influence the quality of life in society.

⁸ Diagram based on: Cambridge University (<https://www.cam.ac.uk/public-engagement/information-for-staff-and-students/public-engagement-and-impact>)

Framed in this way, community engagement is simultaneously a *method* (involving multiple partnerships and collaborative work); a *principle* (with mutual benefit at its core); and an *objective* (of contributing to societal development). Authentic community engagement should involve engaging in a balanced way with a wide range of communities, especially with groups that do not have the resources to engage easily with universities, such as NGOs, social enterprises, cultural organisations, schools, local governments and disadvantaged groups. Finally, while community engagement certainly has a local dimension, it can equally have regional, national and international dimensions.

This chapter also concludes that community engagement is highly relevant to the policy agenda of accountability in higher education – in particular, to the issues of the relevance and impact of higher education. With regard to the latter, policymakers may ideally wish to ‘skip straight to impact’ without delving into the complications of community engagement. However, the last section of this chapter has revealed community engagement as a ‘pathway to impact’ that may be easier to track than the various attempts to develop other measurements of impact – a task that has so far proved elusive.

The next chapter will provide a more detailed description of what community engagement looks like in practice, according to its different dimensions.

Chapter 3. Dimensions of engagement: towards a whole-university approach

The previous two chapters have shown that, in the field of higher education, community engagement is not a single activity that should be carried out as an 'add-on' to the university's core activities. Instead, community engagement is a complex phenomenon that is at the same time a method (involving multiple partnerships and collaborative work), a principle (with mutual benefit at its core) and an objective (of contributing to societal development). Defined in this way, community engagement can be applied in a horizontal way across all types of university-based activities, from the core university missions of teaching and research, to projects and initiatives of the university (and its staff and students), and even to the way that the university frames its own internal governance and management.

This chapter will describe in greater detail the various forms that community engagement can take, using as a framework the six thematic dimensions of engagement proposed in the last chapter:

- Teaching and learning
- Research
- Service and knowledge exchange
- Students
- University-level engagement
- University-level supporting policies

Illustrative practices will be provided for each dimension of engagement, with a special focus of practices from Europe.

3.1. Teaching and learning

According to a literature review carried out by Culum (2018), a range of university activities in the area of teaching and learning can be considered community engagement activities. These include:

- The development of curricula that support community and social development (Charles and Benneworth, 2002; Molas-Gallart et al., 2002; Benneworth et al., 2009).
- Provision of lifelong learning and adult learning opportunities, especially for hard-to-reach groups (Neave; 2000; Bringle and Hatcher, 2002; Benneworth et al., 2009).
- The involvement of community practitioners in devising curricula and delivering teaching as teachers (PRIA, 2012).
- Community-based learning for students (Bringle and Hatcher, op cit.; Molas-Gallart et al., op cit.; Benneworth et al., 2009; PRIA, 2012).

Among these activities, community-based learning is arguably the one that provides most direct mutual benefits, both for the university and the community. It is also one of the most prominent forms of engagement, with interest worldwide rising over last few decades. In the U.S., the term 'service-learning' has been coined to refer to this form of learning,⁹ which has become widespread at most U.S. universities and colleges since the 1990s (Benson et al., 2017). A concise definition of service-learning/community-based learning can be found in Bringle and Hatcher (1995), who refer to it as:

⁹ Although numerous definitions exist of both 'service-learning' and 'community-based learning', and of the differences between them, this report considers these terms to be interchangeable.

'a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.' (p. 112)

Community-based learning is therefore a teaching methodology that combines classroom instruction, community service, student reflection and civic responsibility. A key element of community-based learning is mutual benefit for students, academics, the university and the community involved.

What evidence exists of the impact of community-based learning? In the United States, many studies have been carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of community-based/service-learning on learners. A meta-analysis carried out by Celio et al. (2011) examined the results of 62 studies on service-learning, involving 11,837 students. They concluded that students participating in service-learning programmes demonstrated significant gains (compared to other students) not only in academic performance, but also in areas such as attitudes towards self, attitudes towards school and learning, civic engagement and social skills. Their findings on the effect on student learning are corroborated by another meta-analysis carried out by Warren (2012), while their findings on the positive effect on developing personal, professional and civic competences are confirmed by studies such as Deeley (2010), Eyler and Giles (1999) and Driscoll et al. (1996).

The question of how community-based learning impacts the *community* brings us back to the elusive issue (discussed in the previous chapter) of how to measure the societal impact of higher education. For the same reasons discussed in the previous chapter, there is no simple answer – and hence, relatively little research has been carried out on the impact of service-learning on the community itself (Stoecker et al., 2009; Blouin and Perry, 2009). Nevertheless, at the level of case studies, there is evidence that community-based learning can meet real needs defined by communities, and can result in sustainable relationships between universities and communities (Driscoll et al., 1996; Sandy and Holland, 2006). However, critics point out that such impacts depend on the community having a voice in the process, rather than being merely passive 'recipients' of service-learning (Tryon and Stoecker, 2008; Stoecker et al., 2009) or becoming 'curiosities' of study. Saltmarsh, Hartley and Clayton (2009) note that although universities may undertake a wide range of activities, 'mere activity in a community does not constitute engagement' (p.6). This observation in turn points to another potential risk: that community-based learning can become a form of 'outsourcing' of engagement to students, while academics and the university merely adopt the role of facilitators in the process.

In Europe, community-based learning is not yet as developed and widespread as it is in the U.S. or in Latin America (Cayuella et al., 2019). Nevertheless, since the 2000s a growing movement in support of community-based learning has emerged among European universities, as evidenced by the establishment of national associations for community-based learning and the European Observatory for Service Learning in Higher Education (Cayuella et al., 2019). Box 3.1 below provides examples illustrating community-based learning initiatives by European universities. As the examples demonstrate, community-based learning is not only applicable to academic disciplines that appear to have a direct relation to communities, such as the social sciences, but can be applied to a wide range of disciplines, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Box 3.1: Community-based learning: illustrative examples from European universities**IngénieursSud (Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium)**

Field: Engineering and technology/Earth sciences/Business

For one full academic year, students collaborate with students from universities in the Global South that are seeking sustainable technological solutions to problems identified by local communities. The programme ends with a one-month internship in the field for Belgian and local students to implement their solution with the local communities. After they return, students share their experiences with other students and scientists in the context of courses or extra-curricular activities.

Sociology and service-learning (Nottingham Trent University, UK)

Field: Sociology

Open to both undergraduate and Master's students in sociology, the programme involves working on projects determined by local, not-for-profit organisations in Nottingham, a city that faces significant social and economic problems. An integral part of the programme is mutual benefit between the community and the university: students reflect upon and connect to their disciplinary understandings within the wider disciplinary framework of public sociology, while local partners gain support through university resources and sustainable relationships with the university.

Community-based participatory (evaluation) research (University of Rijeka, Croatia)

Field: Education

Evaluation Research is a mandatory course for second-year undergraduate students in the Department of Education at Rijeka. Each academic year, an agreement is signed with community organisations (e.g. NGOs, schools, kindergartens, museums), whose projects are evaluated by students over the course of a semester. Combining theory and fieldwork, the course is planned and delivered in close cooperation with community partners, and is therefore tailored to meet their particular needs.

Support to children of mothers in penitentiary centres (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)

Field: Education

Students from the School of Teacher Training and Education enrolled in the course 'Theory and Politics of Education' can collaborate with a local NGO in providing care to children aged 1-3 who live in prison with their mothers. The aim of the project is to contribute to providing a stimulating and safe environment for the children's development, with a learning component for students that relates to issues such as social justice and diversity. Course evaluation is carried by the students, the teacher and the community partner.

Educational games for children with disabilities (KU Leuven, Belgium)

Field: IT

Undergraduate students at Leuven enrolled in the study programme 'Engineering Technology: Electronics-ICT', interact with a local non-profit to develop online exercises to help children with disabilities master basic computer skills (e.g. clicking, dragging, moving the mouse pointer). The students evaluate their work in a school for children with disabilities.

Source: European Observatory for Service-Learning in Higher Education (n.d.)

3.2. Research

Community engagement in the area of research involves the establishment of collaborative partnerships between university researchers and the university's external communities. 'Collaborative research' is a term that has increasingly been used to refer to research partnerships between universities or other public research organisations with business and industry (Perkmann and Walsh, 2007). In the context of framing community engagement in its broadest sense as partnerships with external communities, collaborative research partnerships between universities and businesses are of course highly relevant. However, since the primary focus of collaborative research is on economic development, the term may not capture other forms of research partnerships that address societal needs and engage with harder-to-reach societal groups. The term 'community-based research'¹⁰ therefore completes the picture of how research can be carried out in a mutually beneficial way between a university and its external communities. Community-based research is defined by Strand et al. (2003) as a collaborative form of research that addresses a community-identified need, and which differs from traditional academic research in the following ways:

- The research is carried out in a collaborative way between academic researchers (professors and/or students) and community members.
- The research is based on validating multiple sources of knowledge (i.e. community knowledge) and multiple methods of discovery and dissemination, thus contributing to 'democratising knowledge'.
- The ultimate goal of the research is to contribute to social change.

Another definition of community-based research, this time referred to as 'engaged research' and presented from a policy perspective (provided by the Irish Universities Association), is as follows:

'Engaged research describes a wide range of rigorous research approaches and methodologies that share a common interest in collaborative engagement with the community and aim to improve, understand or investigate an issue of public interest or concern, including societal challenges. Engaged research is advanced with community partners rather than for them.' (Campus Engage, n.d., p. 4)

Over the last decade, implementation of community-based research has been particularly prominent in the areas of healthcare and social care, leading to the adoption of the term 'Patient and Public Involvement' (PPI) in research, which is now increasingly a requirement for research funding (Bagley et al., 2016).

With regard to impact, Strand (2000) provides evidence of the positive impact of community-based research on enhancing learning outcomes for students, on enhancing the teaching process, and on improving the quality of research. In the European context, a recent study provided the first international evidence of the positive impact of Patient and Public Involvement on all stages of the research process (Brett et al., 2014). In relation to impact on communities themselves, while acknowledging the previously discussed difficulties with measuring impact, case studies have demonstrated that community-based research can build the capacity of community groups both to advocate policies in their interests and/or to directly influence changes that lead to better outcomes for their communities (Speer and Christens, 2013; Balazs and Morello-Frosch, 2013). This is

¹⁰ Community engagement through research is referred to as 'community-based research' (CBR), 'community-based participatory research' (CBPR) or '(participatory) action research' (Wallerstein and Duran, 2017) and, more recently, 'engaged research'. While each term has its specificities and is not necessarily identical to the others, in this report we apply the term community-based research.

especially well documented in the case of community-based research in the area of public health in the United States (Minkler and Wallerstein (Eds), 2011; Israel et al., 2011).

As previously noted in relation to community-based learning, community-based research can take place in a range of disciplines. Box 3.2 below provides examples illustrating community-based research in Ireland in the areas of health, business, geography and psychology.

Box 3.2: Engaged research: illustrative examples from Ireland

Development of Interventions for Young Adults Living With Type 1 Diabetes

NUI Galway, School of Medicine and Galway University Hospitals

This study aims to engage young adults living with type 1 diabetes through the formation of a panel of health service users who discuss ways to improve healthcare interventions for the target population.

Growing the Social Enterprise – Opportunities and Challenges

University of Limerick, Kemmy Business School

This research investigates the nature and diversity of social enterprises, with the aim of addressing the challenges that social entrepreneurs face in trying to run a social enterprise as a business without diminishing its social value and ethos.

Dublin Urban Laboratory: The Housing Crisis

Maynooth University, Department of Geography

Researchers collaborate with a range of housing activists and organisations on this project, which investigates the nature and root causes of the housing crisis, and explores alternatives to existing housing solutions.

Implementation Strategies to Support Patients of Different Origins and Language Backgrounds in a Variety of European Primary Care Settings

University of Limerick, Health Research Institute

This research aimed to improve communication in cross-cultural consultations between migrants and primary care providers. It was conducted with the participation of local migrants across a number of European states.

Haven: Intervening for Human Security in the Mediterranean Crisis

NUI Galway, Department of Geography

The project aims to develop a collaborative body of research that addresses the root causes of the Mediterranean refugee crisis and offers alternative intervention scenarios. It also involves a series of public events allowing the development and dissemination of critical perspectives.

Impact of Domestic Violence on those Growing up in Affected Families

University of Limerick, Department of Psychology

This research investigates the impact of domestic violence on young adults who have grown up in homes where it has occurred. It also assesses how the issue is managed by systems tasked with protecting young people.

Source: Campus Engage (n.d.)

In a parallel track to community-based research (with occasional overlaps), the concept of '**citizen science**' has become increasingly prominent over past decades and has recently seen an increase in policy attention and funding from the European Union. Citizen science was one of the five strategic orientations of the European Commission's Work Programme 2018-2020, 'Science with and for Society' (SwafS), under Horizon 2020. It is framed as an integral part of both Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and Open Science. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, citizen science is defined as 'scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions'. However, citizen science can be defined in a number of ways, and has been described Eitzel et al., (2017) as being simultaneously

- a method (to allow traditional scientific research to reach a larger scale);
- a movement (to democratise the scientific research process, to increase science literacy and public trust in science);
- and a social capacity (to empower communities to advocate for their local environments through scientific research).

According to a framework developed by Haklay (2013), citizen science can vary from a low to a high level of citizen engagement. The lowest level of engagement is also known as 'crowd-sourcing', whereby citizens only act as data-collectors or observers of certain phenomena (e.g. of climate patterns). In the highest form of engagement, referred to as 'extreme citizen science', citizens are involved in all stages of the development of the research project and work to achieve goals that are directly relevant to their community/interest.

Currently, thousands of citizen science projects are being carried out across Europe, with the vast majority of projects and participants located in the UK and Germany (Science Europe, 2018). While community-based research often relates to the social sciences and to public health, citizen science projects are predominantly in the life sciences, with the main fields of study being biology, ecology and conservation, with the largest scientific output in ornithology, astronomy, meteorology and microbiology (Science Europe, 2018). Box 3.3 provides examples illustrating citizen science projects in Europe, including an example of extreme citizen science and of crowd-sourcing projects.

Box 3.3: Citizen science: illustrative examples from Europe

Example of 'extreme citizen science'

Mapping for Change (University College London)

<https://mappingforchange.org.uk/>

Mapping for Change is a social enterprise that uses mapping tools to help disadvantaged communities in North and East London develop community maps to address urban environmental concerns and monitor their surroundings (e.g. noise pollution and air quality). In a citizen science project on air quality in London, Mapping for Change managed to identify air pollution problems by providing low-tech monitoring equipment to many community members, and the results succeeded in impacting local policy.

Examples of citizen science as 'crowd-sourcing'

Geo-Wiki (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis – IIASA, Austria)

<https://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/researchPrograms/EcosystemsServicesandManagement/Geo-Wiki.en.html>

The Geo-Wiki platform provides citizens with the means to engage in environmental monitoring of the earth. Data can be input via the traditional desktop platform or using mobile devices, with campaigns and games used to incentivise input. Geo-Wiki has over 15,000 registered users and applications in many successful citizen science campaigns including crowd-sourcing global agricultural field-size data, performing post-disaster damage assessment, and poverty mapping.

The Big Bug Hunt (Growing Interactive and the University of York)

<https://bigbughunt.com/>

An international research project to create an advanced system to predict garden pests by combining the latest developments in computer statistical analysis with reports from gardeners around the world. The Big Bug Hunt claims to be 'possibly the largest citizen science project of its kind', reaching out to millions of gardeners to gather information and report pest sightings.

Lingscape (University of Luxembourg)

<https://lingscape.uni.lu/>

Lingscape is an app for researching 'linguistic landscapes' all over the world, by which it means the different kinds of signs and lettering in public spaces. The project aims to analyse the diversity and dynamics of public writing by collecting photos of signs and lettering on an interactive map. Since 2016, the app has collected more than 14,500 photos, created more than 40 external projects, and attracted more than 600 active contributors.

AnnoTate (Tate Archive and Zooniverse/University of Oxford)

<https://anno.tate.org.uk/>

AnnoTate is a crowd-sourced transcription tool specifically addressing fine art materials and content. Using the tool, volunteers can read and then transcribe the personal papers of British-born and émigré artists, helping to reveal the inspiration and stories behind some of the greatest works of the past century.

3.3. Knowledge exchange and service

As described in Chapter 2, although knowledge exchange can imply two-way partnerships between a university and a range of external partners, the term has usually been applied to interactions with business and industry (Hughes and Kiston, 2012). In this context, a useful reference for understanding knowledge exchange is the framework developed by Molas-Gallart et al. (2002), which defines the range of what the authors term ‘third stream activities’ that can be derived from a university’s core missions of teaching and research, and from other core university resources. Among these activities, the following could fall under the category of knowledge exchange:

- The commercialisation of technologies
- Entrepreneurial activities
- Advisory work and contracts
- Contract research

Technology transfer does not fit logically within the category of community engagement as defined in the present report. However, the other types of knowledge exchange activities listed could be relevant, assuming that such activities also bring societal benefits, rather than purely private benefits to external stakeholders.

Service, on the other hand, refers to the provision of a public service by academic staff (and students) to the community. The framework developed by Charles and Benneworth (2002) to define the regional contributions of universities includes two dimensions in this category, defined as ‘Leading debates around the university/society compact’ and ‘Organising and hosting events and festivals for the community’. Among the nine types of community engagement activities proposed by Bringle and Hatcher (2002), two also relate to this dimension of service: ‘Economic and political outreach’ and ‘Faculty professional service’. In the U.S., the Carnegie Classification of Community Engagement (Brown University, n.d.) includes the dimension ‘Outreach and partnership’, which includes many activities that also fit into the dimension proposed in this report, such as the provision of non-credit courses, tutoring, training programmes, learning centres, professional development centres and evaluation support for external communities.

Combining the distinct activities of knowledge exchange and service as a joint dimension of community engagement (as proposed in Benneworth et al., 2009 and in Farnell et al., forthcoming) can be justified by the fact that these activities tend to be carried out by academic staff as projects, programmes or initiatives that are *supplementary* to their core teaching and research activities. A useful summary of what activities fit into this category within the specific framework of community engagement is provided below.

Table 3.1: Typology of university engagement activities for knowledge-sharing and service

Knowledge sharing	Consultancy, with hard-to-reach groups as beneficiaries
	Publicly funded knowledge exchange projects
	Capacity building with hard-to-reach groups
	Knowledge sharing through student ‘consultancy’
	Promoting public dialogue and media
Service	Making university assets and services accessible
	Encouraging hard-to-reach groups to use assets
	Making an intellectual contribution as an ‘expert’
	Contributing to the civic life of the region

Adapted from Benneworth et al. (2009)

Information is not yet readily available on the knowledge exchange and service activities of universities across Europe. Box 3.4 below therefore provides an illustration of knowledge exchange and service activities from a U.S. university, including both highly developed community engagement activities and highly structured monitoring of such activities, resulting in a wealth of information being publicly available.

Box 3.4: Knowledge exchange and service: illustrative examples from the University of Chicago

Small business growth programme

Minority and locally owned businesses are paired with teams of UChicago students for 10-week consulting engagements focusing on questions of business growth.

YWCA construction training programme

A construction and carpentry training programme for local residents with job readiness, financial planning and placement supports. UChicago provides space, pairs students as maths tutors and connects university services, construction partners, and union contacts.

Crime lab briefing on 'Choose to Change' evaluation

UChicago hosted a briefing with the Chicago Mayor's Office to share promising preliminary findings from the UChicago evaluation of the 'Choose to Change' (C2C) programme, a mentoring and therapy programme delivered by local NGOs to youth at greatly elevated risk of involvement in violence and disengagement from school.

Community Grand Rounds events

A series of events by UChicago in collaboration with community partners, allowing individuals from the community to engage with thematic table hosts with the goal of having a solution-based dialogue about topics that impact them (including anxiety, depression and suicide; sexually transmitted diseases and infections; and community violence and homicides).

Report on school closings in Chicago

The UChicago Consortium on School Research released a report on staff and student experiences and academic outcomes in schools affected by the school closures in Chicago in 2013, with briefings organised for key community leaders and local officials in the neighbourhoods of Chicago affected by the closures.

Advocacy for urban redevelopment

UChicago advocated for the State of Illinois to designate neighbourhoods in South Chicago as 'Opportunity Zones', referring to a status set by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to spur development in low-income communities via tax incentives. Of the 43 areas UChicago suggested, the state designated 24 as Opportunity Zones.

Cancer Education Programme for minority groups

UChicago partnered with three community-based organisations to deliver a culturally tailored education programme on colorectal cancer delivered to members of the Asian-American and African-American communities, with 250 participants and 150 screening tests administered.

Source: University of Chicago (n.d.)

3.4. Student initiatives

In most of the literature on community engagement, students are positioned as the key actors in a university's community engagement. The involvement of students is usually framed in terms of the university's role in coordinating and promoting extra-curricular volunteering opportunities for students (Bingle and Hatcher, 2002), by connecting students to communities and ensuring knowledge sharing through student 'consultancy' (Benneworth et al., 2009), or by facilitating community-based learning or community-based research by students as a core part of their study programmes (Holland, 1997; Furco, 2009; Brown University, n.d.).

Less widely acknowledged in most of the literature is students' own agency in launching and implementing their own community engagement activities. Such activities can take place within the framework of formal student organisations (with the support of the university) or as informal initiatives such as student activism and advocacy that may take place independently of university support and can contribute to positive social change in their surrounding communities. Hart et al. (2009) acknowledge this element of community engagement by referring to 'Student-led activities (e.g. arts, environment)' – as do Charles and Benneworth (2002), who include the indicator of 'Student community action' (5.3) in their framework on the regional contributions of universities, in reference to active programme of community action undertaken and led by the student union. Box 3.3 below provides examples of student-initiated and student-led activities from universities in Europe, based on data collected through the project 'Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education' (TEFCE).

Box 3.5: Student-led community engagement: illustrative examples from European universities

In Dresden Ankommen (Technische Universität Dresden, Germany)

A student initiative, also supported by staff members of TU Dresden, which aims to coordinate projects by student volunteers to assist refugees. The initiative also contributes to the development of structures that enable the successful integration of refugees and intercultural exchange between refugees and students.

Sustain (University of Twente, Netherlands)

An association initiated by students and supported by staff at the University of Twente, which seeks to see the University incorporate sustainability principles at its core. The association hosts public events such as talks, workshops, symposia, excursions etc. in collaboration with other groups within the university and the local community who are working on related topics.

Travelling Scientists (University of Rijeka, Croatia)

A project of the Biotechnology Students' Association of the University of Rijeka that aims to popularise science among primary school pupils and preschool children. On their own, students plan, organise and deliver interactive workshops and experiments in the primary schools and kindergartens of Primorsko-Goranska County, in the capacity of volunteers.

TU Dublin Enactus (Technological University Dublin, Ireland)

Enactus is an international non-profit organisation whose goal is to foster sustainable social entrepreneurship. It is led by student groups at universities worldwide. At TU Dublin, the team takes the form of a student-led society that successfully engages with a diverse range of communities, from supporting retired community members to establish tours of Dublin based on their life experiences, to 'Eirtote' – a project that aims to spread awareness about sustainable fashion as well as teaching asylum seekers to embroider onto sustainable tote bags. The teams are supported in developing their projects by professional/industry mentors, academic staff and Enactus Ireland.

Sources: Westerheijden et al. (2020); Jannack et al. (forthcoming); O'Brien et al. (forthcoming); Čulum Ilić et al. (forthcoming)

3.5. University-level engagement

The previous dimensions discussed have covered types of community engagement that, although being activities that would greatly benefit from the support of the university, could still be carried out in a bottom-up way by individual academics or students. The following two dimensions relate to activities that have to be established at the central university management level – that is, from the top down. The first of these dimensions relates to community engagement activities that are launched at the central university level, while the second relates to measures to support and recognise community engagement by university staff and students.

As institutions, universities can become community-engaged by opening up the university spaces and facilities to the community (OECD-CERI, 1982; Charles and Benneworth, 2002), including as venues for cultural and social activity (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002; Goddard and Puukka, 2008) or as providers of other public services, including health services (Goddard and Puukka, 2008). This notion of access to university resources is not limited to physical facilities, but also to the university’s knowledge, in line with the principles of ‘open science’, including through open access to research and to educational resources in the form of public lectures and educational materials. University management can also take a leading role in building institutional relationships and partnerships with external communities. A useful framework offering examples of such activities is provided in Hart et al. (2009), which is included in Table 3.2 below. Although the dimensions in the framework include overlaps with previous dimensions (teaching and research, for example), the key point is that these are measures that are both *institutionalised* and either launched or supported by the central university level.

Table 3.2: University-level community engagement activities

Dimension of engagement	Examples of engagement
Public access to facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to university libraries • Access to university buildings and physical facilities e.g. for conferences, meetings, events, accommodation, gardens, etc. • Shared facilities e.g. museums, art galleries • Public access to sports facilities • Summer sports schools
Public access to knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to established university curricula • Public engagement events, e.g. science fairs, science shops • Publicly accessible database of university expertise • Public involvement in research
Institutional relationship and partnership building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University division or office for community engagement • Collaborative community-based research programmes responsive to community-identified needs • Community–university networks for learning/dissemination/knowledge exchange • Community members on the board of governance • Public ceremonies, awards, competitions and events • Website with community pages • Policies on equality, recruitment, procurement of goods and services, environmental responsibility • International links • Conferences with public access and public concerns • Helpdesk facility • Corporate social responsibility

Author’s selection (three out of seven dimensions) from Hart et al. (2009)

3.6. University-level supporting policies

The final dimension relates to the extent to which the community engagement activities of academics and students are actively supported and encouraged by university policies, rather than remaining the result of individual efforts. Bruckart et al. (2006) and Goddard et al. (2016) have argued that a university's management and leadership is the crucial element in ensuring that community engagement becomes embedded within the university, rather than remaining a collection of parallel and uncoordinated activities.

Many existing frameworks for assessing community engagement in higher education focus explicitly on the extent to which such activities are institutionalised. Such frameworks include the Holland (1997) matrix for analysing institutional commitment to service; the indicators of engagement by Hollander, Saltmarsh and Zlotkowski (2001); the institutional self-assessment rubrics for institutionalising community engagement developed by Gelmon et al. (2010) and Furco et al. (2009); a self-assessment and external assessment benchmarking framework (pilot) developed by the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (Garlick and Langworthy, 2008); and the Carnegie Elective Classification of Community Engagement (Brown University, n.d.). Within such frameworks, the most common indicators of the extent of institutionalisation include:

- Incorporation of community engagement into university mission statements and strategic objectives.
- Evidence of the authentic integration of community engagement into teaching and research.
- An express commitment by university leaders to community engagement.
- Incorporation of community engagement into university policies for the recruitment, promotion and tenure of staff.
- Establishment of institutional support structures for community engagement (in the form of an office, assigned staff or a committee).
- Ensuring funding sources for community engagement.
- Providing recognition and awards for community-engaged scholarship.

Because U.S. universities have both a long tradition of community engagement and a wealth of data and reports on their community engagement activities available on their websites, Box 3.6 presents an example illustrating how a community-engaged university (i.e. one with an Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement) embeds community engagement into its institutional policies, structures and practices.

Box 3.6. Institutionalisation of community engagement: example of Arizona State University

Arizona State University (ASU) is one of 360 universities in the U.S. that have been awarded the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement. A number of features in ASU's profile underline the extent to which community engagement is deeply institutionalised at the university:

- ASU's charter (i.e. **mission statement**) emphasises that it is a public research university 'assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves'.
- Furthermore, ASU sets out community engagement as one of its four **strategic goals**, under the heading 'Enhance our local impact and social embeddedness'. This goal includes cooperation with the community in teaching and learning and 'co-developing solutions to the critical social, technical, cultural and environmental issues facing 21st century Arizona'.
- ASU has an **institutional structure** to support community engagement in the form of a central Office of Government and Community Engagement, which liaises with governmental officials and institutions at national, state and local levels, with surrounding municipalities and communities, and with Arizona's tribal nations. ASU also has a central Community Engagement Programmes office to coordinate service-learning at the university.
- ASU's engagement is embedded into its curriculum across all disciplines, and is even reflected in its **academic departments** – for example, through the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions (whose objective is to have a system-wide impact on social, behavioural, economic and political challenges), or through the School of Sustainability, which aims to develop practical solutions to the most pressing sustainability challenges.
- In 2018, ASU established the **ASU Social Embeddedness Network** to connect and support community engagement practitioners across the university in sharing their best practices, tools and lessons learned.
- ASU provides **recognition** to staff for achievements in community engagement through the President's Medal for Social Embeddedness; acknowledging interdisciplinary teams that have demonstrated excellence in partnering with the community; as well as through the College of Public Service and Community Solutions Dean's Cup and the Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellowship Award.
- ASU actively **monitors and evaluates** its community engagement activities across all academic and non-academic units. ASU's Office of University Initiatives conducts an annual Social Embeddedness Survey to create an inventory of the diverse community-engaged activities occurring across every facet of the university.
- ASU publishes **annual reports** documenting its community engagement activities, as well as their outcomes and impacts on communities. In 2018, ASU faculty and staff reported working with 2,178 unique partners, and 1,072 students participated in Community Engagement Programs, providing 92,101 service hours to the community.

Sources: Arizona State University (2019); Arizona State University (n.d.)

It is worth ending this chapter, however, with an example of the institutionalisation of community engagement that is specifically European. 'Science shops' are structures that first emerged in the Netherlands in the 1970s. Their aim is to connect universities (or other research institutions) with citizen groups or non-governmental organisations that require answers to questions that are relevant to their communities (Leydesdorff and Ward, 2005). In practice, citizens groups approach science shops with a problem that they need to address, and a university team (usually consisting of students, but sometimes including university research staff) carry out collaborative research with the citizen groups to identify possible solutions. The science shop movement has since grown considerably, with science shops being established in the 1980s in Germany, France, Denmark and Belgium, in the 1990s in Austria and the UK; and in the late 1990s, in Central and Eastern Europe. The European Commission continues to support science shop initiatives through its Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes, and science shops are connected internationally via the International Science Shop network Living Knowledge, which aims to 'foster public engagement with, and participation in, all levels of the research and innovation process' (Living Knowledge, n.d.). Science shops are therefore highly relevant as institutional structures that work as an intermediary between the university and the community, and can support the delivery of community-based learning, community-based research and other forms of service to the community. Box 3.7 provides examples illustrating the activities and achievements of two science shops in Europe.

Box 3.7. Institutionalisation of community engagement: examples of science shops in Europe

Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University Science Shop (UK/Northern Ireland)

Established in 1988 as a joint initiative between Queen's University Belfast and the Ulster University, the Science Shop supports community organisations in developing research projects which are carried out by students at Queen's and Ulster University as part of their degree programme. Since 2014, the Science Shop has delivered 1,314 community research projects, with 4,894 students and 366 community organisations taking part (including sports clubs, youth groups and environmental organisations). Student dissertation projects carried out in partnership with local organisations have included addressing issues such as: the links between diet and the prevention of dementia; the psychological health of young carers; and the impact of low temperatures on local vegetation, and recommendations to protect it.

SMART, University of Twente (the Netherlands)

SMART (formerly known as Science Shop) is part of Novel-T, a brokering unit at the University of Twente that connects entrepreneurs, the community of Enschede and the Region of Twente with the university and another local higher education institution (Saxion University of Applied Sciences). SMART enables entrepreneurs and non-profit organisations to gain access to students and academic knowledge to help them achieve their goals. In 2018, 160 students were active for 26,000 hours in projects with social organisations and SMEs in the region. Projects included:

- A simulation model for water reuse (a project by a civil engineering student involving a citizen group, the water authority and the municipality).
- A business model for plastic recycling (a project by a student of business studies).
- Measuring the effectiveness of theatre for mentally impaired persons (a project by a psychology student).
- An 'E-rower' for the elderly – concept development, prototype and testing (a project carried out by three students as part of their theses).

Sources: Queen's University Belfast (n.d.); Westerheijden et al. (2020).

3.7. Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated some of the forms that community engagement takes at universities in Europe and beyond. These practices reveal the range of communities with which universities can engage (from governments and businesses to civil society organisations and disadvantaged communities) as well as the range of societal issues that can be addressed (from economic development to social equality and climate change). The practices also show that community engagement can take place in all academic disciplines, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects), and especially in medicine.

The chapter reinforces the claim that community engagement should be addressed using a whole-university approach, rather than being considered as an 'optional extra'. Because community engagement can take place through such a wide range of university activities and in such diverse forms, there is a need for support by university leadership and management, including through governance, organisational, financial and human resource policies. When such support is ensured, it can mobilise the academic community around this agenda, 'connect the dots' of different engagement practices throughout the university, and create an institutional environment that is conducive to community engagement.

The illustrative practices identified in this chapter within Europe were made visible due to the emergence of structured initiatives to support community engagement (such as the European Observatory for Service-Learning in Higher Education, the Living Knowledge network, or national structures such as Campus Engage in Ireland). However, much of the community engagement activity in European higher education is still 'beneath the radar' and is much harder to identify than, for example, in the United States, which has a longer history of community engagement and more structured monitoring and reporting on such activities.

The next chapter discusses why community engagement is still not prominent in European higher education and why it has not been considered as a priority, either at the national level or university level. The chapter will consider what would be the preconditions and drivers for community engagement to eventually thrive in European higher education.

Chapter 4. Challenges and new approaches to institutionalising community engagement in higher education

The previous chapter presented the range of ways in which universities can be community-engaged through their teaching, research and other institutional activities, including illustrations of the ways in which European universities have embraced this agenda. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, however, until recently, community engagement has rarely featured in policy priorities for higher education and research.

What are the reasons for this lack of attention to community engagement as a relevant agenda in higher education? In order to understand the challenges that face community engagement, it is necessary to understand the external pressures facing universities at a global level, and the internal difficulties of implementing community engagement at the level of the university. This chapter explores these questions and considers what policy levers exist (both at the level of the higher education system and at the level of individual universities) to push the community agenda forward in spite of these challenges. The chapter also considers which approaches might be the most appropriate and effective, before we go on to propose policy recommendations in the next chapter.

4.1. External challenges: policy pressures on higher education

Although it is beyond the scope of this report to elaborate on the complex combination of factors that have influenced the development of higher education at a global level, it is useful to bear in mind the major trends encountered by universities over the last few decades that have resulted in new pressures on higher education:

- **Higher education and the knowledge economy:** The emergence of a post-industrial, knowledge-based economy has increased the importance of and demand for higher education, and placed pressures on universities to increase access to higher education (Trow, 1974); prepare students for the labour market (developing 'human capital') (Brown and Lauder, 2001; van Vught, 2009); and engage with business and contribute directly to innovation and economic development through research and development, in particular through technology transfer (Zomer and Benneworth, 2011).
- **'Massification' of higher education:** The massification of higher education has placed significant pressure on public budgets to cover the costs associated with the growing demand to participate in higher education. This has led to the adoption of various policy and/or institutional responses, including the introduction of tuition fees and student loan schemes; competition between universities for student recruitment, particularly with regard to international students; the rise global of university league tables, etc. These developments have required universities to adopt entrepreneurial, strategic and managerial approaches to planning their activities and financial resources (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Clark, 1998; Marginson, 2004; Hazelkorn, 2009).
- **Globalisation and higher education:** In addition to the trend towards the internationalisation of higher education and global science (e.g. the mobility of students and academic staff; the growth of research and academic networks), the pressures brought by globalisation include the aforementioned global competition between universities and the growing role of transnational institutions and structures in influencing national higher education policy, including the EU, the OECD and the Bologna Process (Marginson and van der Wende, 2007; Rizvi and Lindgard, 2009). In the global context, universities may (erroneously) perceive that

they can either be 'world-class' or locally/regionally engaged, but not both (Goddard and Puukka, 2008, p. 26).

- **Governance of higher education:** 'New Public Management' has become the predominant approach by which national authorities steer higher education performance, linking institutional funding to the achievement of national objectives measured via performance frameworks, audits and other accountability tools (Shore, 2008; Ozga, 2011; Broucker and De Wit, 2015). As the importance of higher education to society and the economy strengthens, more organisations or societal groups are recognised as 'stakeholders' in higher education (e.g. intergovernmental organisations, government agencies, local/regional authorities, employers, civil society). These organisation and groups have a stronger voice in shaping the governance of higher education (Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno, 2007; Benneworth and Jongbloed, 2010).

This overview of trends helps to explain the context in which increasing demands are being made on universities to respond to the growing and complex needs of society, with greater emphasis being placed on strengthening their third mission, and on the economic role of universities. The framing of higher education policy in terms of supporting the knowledge economy is a global occurrence (Rizvi and Lindgard, 2009).

The changing context in which higher education operates today has inevitably influenced the types of decisions taken and the ways in which universities operate. This includes, inter alia:

- Universities are aligning their priorities more closely with national and societal objectives and targets in return for public funding (e.g. performance-based funding systems).
- Universities are focusing more on ('excellent') research than on other missions, due both to access to research funding and in order to perform better in global university league tables, which in turn play a key role in attracting new staff and students.
- Universities are emphasising entrepreneurial activities that lead to increased third stream revenues, rather than non-commercial activities that may address other societal needs.

Of course, it is important to acknowledge that this summary of trends necessarily presents a simplified picture of the higher education landscape: context-specific exceptions exist, and these trends affect universities in diverse and nuanced ways. In particular, the existence of policy pressures and market pressures on higher education should not be understood as implying that universities are powerless and unable to set their own priorities for addressing societal needs. Universities are policy actors in their own right.

As discussed throughout this report, universities have continually responded to societal needs and have engaged with their communities in a range of creative ways, resulting in a range of societal impacts. This demonstrates that universities are influenced not only by policy and market pressures, but also by broader political and social pressures, including rising social inequality, declining social cohesion, rising political extremism and other 'grand challenges' faced by societies in the 21st century (as described in Chapter 1). Such pressures can compel many universities to act and respond, often despite the lack of supportive policy environments. The main point of this section, however, is that policy and market environments do influence and reward certain types of behaviour among universities and that, in the existing context, addressing pressing societal issues and engaging with harder-to-reach communities has simply not been high on the policy agenda.

In recent years, however, more attention has been given in policy to the breadth of higher education's societal roles. This includes the gradual rise of policy references to grand

challenges, societal impact, relevance and engagement. As discussed in Chapter 1, many flagship initiatives of the European Commission in the field of higher education and research over the last 15 years have been developed to support universities' other missions beyond research, and to support their connections with external communities. These include the development of U-Multirank (which incorporates regional engagement as an indicator), HEInnovate (a tool to support entrepreneurial universities), the University-Business Forum (an event to connect universities and industry) and support for Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and citizen science within Horizon 2020.

In an ideal scenario, establishing and prioritising policy frameworks and tools to support the role of universities in addressing societal needs would help to resolve the aforementioned challenges and succeed in mainstreaming community engagement within higher education in Europe. However, as we will now discuss, the external challenges to community engagement are accompanied by a range of internal challenges at university level, which further complicate the definition of policy solutions.

4.2. Internal challenges: the difficulties of institutionalising community engagement

It is tempting to consider universities as classic organisational structures that respond to and can be transformed by internal leadership and external policy reforms. In reality, however, the university is a complex organisation possessing its own structures, cultures and practices (Clark, 2004; Fumasoli and Stensaker, 2013). Universities consist of separate and often autonomous academic departments or faculties, whose norms and standards in the area of teaching and research differ strongly due to their disciplinary differences. This has led to universities being referred to as 'loosely coupled systems' (Weick, 1976), or even 'organised anarchies' (Cohen and March, 1974). In practice, this means that universities are difficult to steer by central university management, and this problem is further compounded when it involves steering academics towards engagement with external stakeholders (Pinheiro et al., 2012b).

If we assume an imaginary scenario in which a national policy is adopted to prioritise community engagement, what challenges might this policy run into at university level? In his analysis of the challenges facing the embedding of community engagement at universities, Benneworth (2018) highlights the following 'wicked problems':

- **Centralising community engagement can have perverse effects:** The diversity of community engagement activities makes it hard to promote community engagement in a strategic manner. The risk of promoting engagement via central institutional activities is that such activities have a framing effect that limits the definition of what is a strategically desirable form of engagement. This means that those who are not involved in the 'right kind' of engagement will be excluded, and the value and impact brought by their engagement will not be captured.
- **Community engagement takes different forms in different disciplines:** In some disciplines, community engagement can clearly become part of standard academic practice, while in other disciplines it may be harder to identify a way to meaningfully connect community engagement to teaching or research.
- **The diversity of community engagement makes its management difficult:** The fact that community engagement cannot be narrowed down to a finite list of activities, and that forms of community engagement necessarily vary according to the discipline, means that the task of structuring, planning, coordinating and evaluating community engagement across an entire institution becomes remarkably complex.
- **Changing academic practice is a long-term process:** Building a culture of community engagement within a university is 'a long-term process akin to a

generational shift' (p. 39), since academic values and practices are usually formed during the doctoral training phase, meaning that any attempt to introduce new approaches to teaching and research after this phase will require time, resources and space for individual experimentation and learning among academics.

In addition to these internal challenges, two additional external factors must be emphasised. The first is that community engagement is not only 'supply-driven' by the university; it depends on community 'demand'. Different places have different histories of university engagement, different cultures and different external communities. It is likely that some universities operate in environments where communities are much less willing to engage with the university may be much lower, whether this is manifested in indifference or even hostility to university interference (Benneworth, 2018). The second is that the potential for a national policy on community engagement to have a real impact in universities depends on the extent to which it is coordinated with other areas of higher education and research policy. According to Benneworth (2018), one obstacle to community engagement is the 'diversity of inadvertent consequences affecting university-community engagement' (p.35), meaning that policies related to areas such as academic promotion, research assessment or quality assurance may implicitly discourage community engagement activities.

Irrespective of these challenges, the conclusion of the present analysis is not that institutionalising community engagement is impossible. What it tells us, however, is that community engagement is always context-specific, that it is a process, and that any effort to institutionalise it will require time, coordination and support. Efforts to adopt more top-down and streamlined approaches are unlikely to result in the widespread acceptance among academics of community engagement as a valuable objective to pursue.

4.3. Challenges of measurement

As mentioned previously, higher education policies worldwide have increasingly been influenced and shaped by the principles of New Public Management (NPM). NPM refers to techniques and practices for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies that are inspired by practices in the business sector, with a strong focus on ensuring efficiency, economy and effectiveness. NPM is thus based on employing policies and institutions to ensure accountability and transparency, and on measuring the results of policies. In practice, this means that NPM focuses on defining standards and targets (as 'key performance indicators') and verifying that such standards and targets are met. NPM-inspired 'accountability tools' have become central policy mechanisms used in higher education at a global level, including audits, accreditations, quality assurance, performance-based funding, benchmarking and ranking (Broucker et al., 2015).

Developing a policy to support community engagement at the level of the higher education system automatically raises the question of how the success will be *measured*. The conclusions of the two previous sections (and indeed of Chapters 1-3) indicate why relying solely on quantitative indicators to capture community engagement is likely to run into two serious problems:

- **The feasibility of defining meaningful quantitative indicators ('metrics') for community engagement is questionable:** As demonstrated in this report, the concept of community engagement covers a wide variety of activities. The conclusions of an analysis by Farnell and Šćukanec (2018) is that previous attempts to externally assess community engagement using quantitative indicators have not been successful. For example, in 2011 the European Indicators and Ranking Methodology for University Third Mission (E3M) were developed through a project co-funded by the European Commission, with the objective of developing standard

quantitative indicators for the third mission activities of universities. Despite having developed a comprehensive database of 98 indicators, their implementation proved impracticable and the methodology developed has not been used since the project's completion. A separate attempt to develop quantitative indicators to measure universities' social and civic contributions (the Eunivate project) reached the conclusion that none of the proposed indicators would be satisfactory (Benneworth and Zeeman, 2018).

- **The value of using metrics for community engagement is equally questionable:** Some attempts have been made to develop 'proxy' indicators of community engagement (e.g. the number of community partnerships, public lectures or media appearances). Moving beyond concerns as to how well such indicators reflect the broad range of community engagement that actually takes place at a university, the main question is what effect such metrics have on community-engaged practitioners and on the institution as a whole. At best, such metrics could raise the visibility of community engagement and influence the priorities set by university managers, who would need to ensure they meet the given targets (however narrowly they are defined). It is difficult to see, however, how such a bureaucratised framing of community engagement could benefit either community-engaged staff or the university's partner communities, or reflect the value and mutual benefits that their engagement activities bring to the university.

While it is incontestable that there should be mechanisms to verify the extent to which universities meet society's expectations, the default application of metrics has increasingly been brought into question. In their independent review of the use of metrics in research evaluation, Wilsdon et al. (2015) warn that the use of indicators may lead to strategic behaviour and 'gaming' by institutions. They conclude that within the UK's Research Excellence Framework, it is not feasible to assess research quality using quantitative indicators alone. In this context, the conclusion reached by Benneworth et al. (2018) is that New Public Management (NPM) tools focusing on comparisons of competitive performance and top-down steering NPM can be regarded as having reached their limits (p.142). When approaching multi-faceted issues such as community engagement, approaches that focus on quantitative performance risk undermining the rewarding of universities for responding to societal needs. Farnell and Šćukanec (2018) suggest that the European Commission itself is showing increasing acceptance of the limits of simplistic metrics in addressing the multidimensional issues present in higher education. Their analysis refers to recent European Commission-supported initiatives such as HEInnovate (2013), U-Multirank (2014), Indicators for Promoting and Monitoring Responsible Research and Innovation (Strand et al., 2015), and the Regional Innovation Impact Assessment Framework for Universities (Jonkers et al., 2018) as examples of tools that use a mix of assessment methods, combining quantitative and qualitative data to create a better understanding of university performance. Some of the tools even allow for customisation (e.g. through the context-specific selection of indicators, as opposed to applying universal indicators for all institutions/regions) and bottom-up approaches to assessment (e.g. through the definition of indicators by networks of stakeholders, as opposed to central/top-down decisions).

The key question is to determine precisely what is the purpose of the policy tool in question. A useful reference on this topic is the distinction made by Townley (1997, in Upton, 2017) between performance appraisal that is 'judgemental' or 'developmental' in nature. In the former, the purpose is to ensure central coordination and control of both the appraisal process and of those subject to the appraisal. Such an approach is often tied to resource allocation. By contrast, developmental approaches to appraisal are designed to identify current strengths and weaknesses, with a view to facilitating future improvements. In the present context, what 'developmental' approaches could be deployed to respond to more

'judgemental' metrics-based tools? One alternative would be to use institutional self-assessments by universities. According to an analysis by Farnell and Šćukanec (2018), dozens of self-assessment tools exist to help higher education institutions embed community engagement through institutional policies, structures, processes and activities. Among these tools are a number of self-assessment frameworks from the U.S., e.g. the Holland Matrix (Holland, 1997); the Campus Compact Indicators of Engagement (Hollander, Saltmarsh and Zlotkowski, 2001); and the Furco Rubric (Furco et al., 2009). The disadvantages and limits of the existing self-assessment tools analysed are that they focus on the process of institutionalising community engagement rather than mapping what community engagement actually takes place, and that most tools are more 'top-down' than 'bottom-up' since they do not provide a clear platform to incorporate community perspectives into the process.

An alternative form of external assessment that was analysed was the Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification for Community Engagement. Developed in 2006, this tool is arguably the only tool for assessing community engagement that has achieved both national recognition and a growing interest worldwide. The tool provides an innovative approach to assessment. It combines self-assessment with external review by leading scholars in community engagement, who assess which institutions qualify to receive the classification. Such a form of assessment results in a formal, external recognition that an institution has achieved a certain standard of performance. In this sense, the Carnegie Classification provides a formal recognition of excellent performance without providing inter-institutional comparisons of performance – thus allowing the recognition of context-specific forms of engagement, rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach.

4.4. Mapping policy levers for community engagement

Based on the identified challenges to the institutionalising of community engagement, what would be the best policy approach to support this objective? In order to critically consider all available options, it is useful to refer to categorisations of the types of 'policy levers' that can be used to achieve public policy objectives. One such typology, developed by Schneider and Ingram (1990, in van Vught, 1995, p. 18), proposes five types of policy levers:

- **Authority tools:** refers to 'statements backed by the legitimate authority of government that grant permissions, prohibit, or require action under designed circumstances'.
- **Incentive tools:** tools 'that rely on tangible payoffs, positive or negative, to induce compliance or encourage utilization'.
- **Capacity tools:** tools that 'provide information, training, education, and resources to enable individuals, groups, or agencies to make decisions or carry out activities'.
- **Symbolic and hortatory tools:** tools that 'seek to change perceptions about policy-preferred behaviour through appeals to intangible values... or through the use of images, symbols and labels'.
- **Learning tools:** tools that 'provide for wide discretion by lower-level agents or even the target groups themselves, who are able to experiment with different policy approaches'.

Applying this framework to the field of higher education policy, it is possible to discern a range of accountability tools and other mechanisms to steer and/or support university activities. These are presented in Table 4.1 below.¹¹

¹¹ It should be noted that the categorisation of tools and mechanisms should be understood as being flexible, rather than fixed – e.g. a 'capacity-building tool' such as a staff training programme may equally act as a 'learning tool' and as an 'incentive tool'.

Table 4.1: Types of policy levers in higher education

	Accountability tools and other mechanisms
Authority tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations, legal obligations • Accreditation, audit, external quality assurance • Performance-based funding (for core institutional funding)
Incentive tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding incentives (optional; for additional institutional funding) • Reputational incentives: ranking; benchmarking
Capacity tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support programme with targeted project funding • Supporting tools (e.g. self-assessments) • Specialised organisations/organisational units to support policy • Optional institutional reviews • Optional standards and guidelines
Symbolic and hortatory tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy statements (without accompanying policy measures) • Quality labels • Awards
Learning tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning resources, guidelines • Thematic networks, conferences

Source: compiled by the author, using the categorisation by Schneider and Ingram (1990)

Based on the challenges to institutionalising community engagement identified in this chapter, several conclusions can be inferred with regard to which policy levers are feasible and appropriate, and which are more likely to be effective.

The first conclusion is that any targeted policy to support community engagement is unlikely to be effective unless it involves changes to the fundamental framework conditions for higher education and research. Put simply, while an isolated community engagement policy may result in short-term increases in community engagement activity, achieving a system-wide and sustainable increase in university-community engagement can only be achieved if community engagement is incorporated as one of the objectives or principles within the higher education and research systems as a whole. Until academic staff are recognised and rewarded for community engagement through staff recruitment, promotion and tenure procedures, and until engagement is accepted as being part of 'good teaching' and 'good science', such activities will only be carried out by enthusiasts. In this sense, the starting point should be ensuring that **symbolic/hortatory tools** such as national strategies set forth a vision of how community engagement should become an integral feature of higher education and research. This should be followed by **authority tools** to remove legal obstacles and create an enabling environment for engagement.

The second conclusion is that **authority tools** that require compliance to established standards, or which define targets, seem inappropriate to the objective of supporting community engagement, due to its context-specific nature. For example, while adding community engagement as an obligatory criterion for the external assessment of a university's quality (through re-accreditation, thematic audits, etc.) would clearly be influential in institutionalising engagement, such an approach would also run the risk of *bureaucratising* engagement and prioritising certain types of engagement that meet the audit requirements rather than meeting community needs (see e.g. Gould and Dubbs, 2019). A similar challenge would exist in making community engagement part of institutional funding agreements: such an approach would probably require defining metrics, which would risk making the exercise meaningless and open the process to 'gaming' by universities (i.e. finding ways to formally meet quantitative targets without having any authentic community engagement initiatives in place).

The third conclusion is that **incentive tools** that focus on 'reputational incentives' through the use of ranking and benchmarking seem neither feasible nor appropriate. First, while

league tables of universities are influential worldwide, they are increasingly controversial and face on-going criticism over the simplistic logic of ranking universities according to a limited set of indicators (Hazelkorn, 2019.b). Second, the feasibility of creating meaningful metrics for community engagement is low, as discussed above. The main argument against rankings, however, concerns the objective of the intended policy. If the objective is not to increase the *quantity* of community engagement but to encourage universities to develop high-quality, mutually beneficial and impactful community engagement, the form of which will vary depending on its institutional and socioeconomic context, then the use of metrics and ranking is simply the wrong choice of policy lever. On the other hand, financial incentives could play a more meaningful and important role in encouraging such behaviour, e.g. the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in England, whose funding criteria include societal impact, which is demonstrated in context-specific ways through qualitative case studies.

The fourth conclusion is that **capacity tools, symbolic/hortatory tools and learning tools** appear to be the tools best suited to supporting community engagement in higher education, at least in the initial process of making community engagement a more 'normalised' aspect of institutional culture, policies and practices at European universities. This returns us to the concept of developing 'developmental' rather than 'judgemental' tools (Townley, 1997) that support institutional change and improvement, rather than measuring compliance. As evidence to support this claim, we can look to the dominance of such developmental tools (and the absence of judgemental tools) in the U.S., one of the countries with the longest experience of community engagement – and the country with arguably the most developed policies and resources to support community engagement:

- **Symbolic/hortatory tools** can place community engagement on the policy agenda and provide recognition of achievements in community engagement. In the U.S., the prominence of 'service' as a core value of higher education and of the 'scholarship of engagement' has been growing since the 1980s. Indeed, the most prominent policy tool for community engagement today is a quality label awarded to institutions that meet the criteria of the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement.
- **Capacity-building tools** can encompass project funding, institutional structures (offices or structures to connect universities and communities and to support/train staff) and tools to help institutions evaluate and improve their engagement. In the U.S., the Carnegie Classification functions not only as a 'label', but as a developmental process for institutions to assess their strengths, weaknesses and identify room for improvement. In addition, the national organisation Campus Compact is a coalition of more than 1,000 U.S. colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education. This includes developing tools to support universities' community engagement efforts. Such supports structures are mirrored within universities themselves, usually through Community Engagement Offices that support engaged teaching, research and outreach. Finally, as mentioned previously, most of the self-assessment tools to support the institutionalisation of community engagement were developed in the U.S.
- **Learning tools** are developed by Campus Compact not only as resources and for training, but also by connecting community engagement professionals and stakeholders through annual conferences and other events. Additional networks have also been developed, such as the Anchor Institutions Taskforce to support university-community engagement. A range of resources has also been developed by universities, including thematic journals, e.g. the *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education* (Indiana State University) or the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* (University of Georgia).

Practices and policies in the U.S. thus provide a possible model that could be considered and adapted for use in Europe. It is notable that in the 30 years during which the community engagement agenda has developed so significantly in the U.S., no initiatives occurred at pan-European level focusing specifically on developing tools to support all dimensions of community engagement in higher education in a comprehensive way. Instead, initiatives have focused only on specific elements of community engagement (e.g. service learning, science shops, citizen science). In 2018, however, as a response to the emerging community engagement agenda in Europe, the first such initiative materialised in the form of an EU-funded project entitled *Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education* (TEFCE, www.tefce.eu). This project will be presented and discussed below as a possible avenue for developing the community engagement agenda in Europe.

4.5. Towards a European framework for community engagement in higher education

The TEFCE project was launched with the aim of developing innovative and feasible policy tools to support, monitor and assess universities' community engagement. The TEFCE project mapped existing international tools for assessing community engagement in higher education, and reflected critically on both the value brought by such tools and on what aspects such tools may have failed to capture. The objective of the TEFCE project was then to develop a new framework for community engagement that would learn from previous tools, but provide innovative solutions to address the challenges faced in institutionalising community engagement in the European context (Farnell et al., forthcoming).

The TEFCE project therefore developed a 'Toolbox for Community Engagement in Higher Education', representing a combination of three distinct tools:

- (1) A guide for universities to understand the diversity of ways in which community engagement can take place at universities.
- (2) A framework for mapping community engagement already taking place at their institutions and for assessing the university's level of engagement.
- (3) A methodology for participative discussions and critical reflections on the university's overall community engagement in order to reach joint conclusions regarding strengths, areas for improvement and priority action areas.

(Farnell et al., forthcoming)

The TEFCE Toolbox centres on seven thematic dimensions of community engagement, which provided the structure for the presentation of engagement practices in Chapter 3. These dimensions encompass community engagement through teaching, research, knowledge exchange/service, students and university management, as well as dimensions on supportive institutional policies and supportive peers. In practice, a university applying the Toolbox first undertakes a detailed mapping of its range of community engagement initiatives, then uses a reference tool that identifies five different levels of engagement, in order to reach preliminary conclusions regarding its overall level of engagement. After this step, participative discussions are organised with university staff, community-engaged staff, students and community members to identify the institution's strengths and areas in which it could improve.

Although at first glance the Toolbox appears to follow the typical structure of thematic reviews or audits, it adopts four principles (Benneworth et al., 2018) that also represent the four most innovative aspects of the Toolbox when compared to the existing tools discussed above:

- **Commitment to authentic, mutually beneficial community engagement.** The TEFCE Toolbox promotes university-community partnerships that benefit both universities and communities, as opposed to engagement that results in the university being the primary benefactor or in which the university acts as a 'charitable donor' rather than a partner.
- **Empowerment of individual actors within and outside university.** The Toolbox is not only intended for management staff at central university level, but is intended to be meaningful for individual actors, and to recognise the value of different kinds of community engagement activities undertaken by individuals within the university or community.
- **Allowing users of the Toolbox to influence the level of value assigned to different engagement practices.** The Toolbox avoids producing best-practice stories that are selected only by university management, and instead includes mechanisms via which users can provide their own critical reflections on the value of the engagement practices featured, and on the overall conclusions of the assessment.
- **Collaborative learning rather than comparison of competitive performance.** The Toolbox represents a learning journey to motivate universities' community engagement efforts and not provide a mechanism for ranking universities. The framework recognises the collective nature of community engagement activities, and frames them neither as being only individually driven, nor as being able to benefit from competition between units or universities.

Table 4.2 below demonstrates in greater detail how the adoption of these principles can address the specific challenges involved in 'measuring' community engagement, using an approach that is focused on capacity building and that is compatible with the multi-faceted and context-specific nature of community engagement.

Table 4.2: The TEFCE Toolbox for community engagement in higher education

Obstacles to creating a tool	Proposed solution through TEFCE Toolbox
Community engagement consists of too wide a range of activities to summarise in a framework	The Toolbox categorises community engagement into seven thematic dimensions/21 sub-dimensions, focusing on where engagement takes place and possible types of activities, rather than on a finite list of activities. The flexibility of the Toolbox ensures that no activities can be excluded <i>a priori</i> .
Community engagement activities are not all equal: they can be implemented in superficial or authentic ways, in terms of the mutual benefits that they bring	An innovative aspect of the Toolbox is its primary focus on the level of authenticity and mutual benefit provided by community engagement activities at a university. The Toolbox has at its core a rubric with a five-level scale of engagement, with indicators describing different levels of engagement. This 'progression model' also serves as a reference to universities on how to achieve more mutually beneficial partnerships.
Different academic disciplines do not have the same opportunities to carry out community engagement activities	The Toolbox focuses on capturing a picture of the university as a whole, by capturing community engagement initiatives from a range of different academic disciplines. There are no headline targets and no expectation or verification of engagement being equal across all fields.
It is not feasible to develop quantitative indicators of community engagement	The Toolbox focuses on a qualitative methodology consisting of collecting case studies and of participative discussions between practitioners and management. At the same time,

Obstacles to creating a tool	Proposed solution through TEFCE Toolbox
	the Toolbox does provide a referential scale of numerical levels to allow institutions to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
It is almost impossible to identify all of the university's range of engagement activities, thus further complicating its management	The Toolbox provides a methodology for 'mapping' community engagement at the university, basing itself not on cataloguing all engagement activities but on collecting of a sufficient number of representative case studies to cover at least each of the sub-dimensions of the framework.
Centralising the management of community engagement can have perverse effects	The Toolbox adopts a participative, practitioner-based approach that avoids top-down conclusions as to performance that are reached by university management alone. Instead, it moves towards a discussion-based consensus on strengths and areas for improvement.
Community engagement is context-specific – there would be no value in comparing universities' performance	The TEFCE Toolbox is intended as an institutional-level developmental tool and not as a way of comparing or benchmarking institutional performance. The Toolbox does, however, allow peer-learning between universities applying the Toolbox.

Source: Compiled by the author, based on Farnell et al. (forthcoming)

During 2019, the TEFCE Toolbox was piloted by four universities and their local communities (Technical University of Dresden, Germany; Technological University Dublin, Ireland; the University of Rijeka, Croatia; University of Twente, the Netherlands). The conclusions of these pilots were that the Toolbox methodology allows for context-specific application (in different types of institutions and socioeconomic environments) and brings value to the institution by discovering community engagement activities that were often previously invisible at institutional level. By using a participative and bottom-up approach, the Toolbox allows for greater ownership of the process at the level of community engagement practitioners and stakeholders. The outcomes of applying the Toolbox included the recognition of community engagement achievements and the identification of potential for improvement, but also creating the conditions for improvement by mobilising potential participants. The resulting reports and recommendations have become the basis for discussions with university management about how the findings could inform future university policies and priorities.

The TEFCE Toolbox thus represents a potential European framework for community engagement in higher education, acting as a reference tool, mapping framework and participative methodology for evaluation and planning. Being the only tool so far developed that specifically addresses community engagement, and is based on innovative solutions to previous attempts to 'capture' engagement through accountability tools, the TEFCE Toolbox arguably presents a unique opportunity for its use as a basis for European efforts in this area. The TEFCE project is currently exploring future scenarios for making the use of the Toolbox widespread and sustainable in the future, both through the bottom-up initiatives of engaged universities in Europe and/or through ensuring top-down support for such a framework at policy level.

4.6. Conclusions

This chapter has shown that pressures on higher education systems and universities at a global level have made community engagement a low priority. At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, a range of political and socioeconomic challenges are putting increasing pressure on universities to meet societal needs. Today, the prospect of a gradual

shift in the policy environment in favour of the greater involvement of higher education in addressing societal challenges provides an opportunity to resolve this paradox. Nevertheless, the obstacles facing community engagement are also internal to universities themselves, both at the level of coordinating diverse community engagement activities, and in terms of the acceptance by academics of engagement as a legitimate and recognised knowledge activity (i.e. as a 'normal' part of teaching and research).

The chapter has argued that the policy approach most likely to effectively support community engagement in higher education is, firstly, to have an overarching policy framework that explicitly supports community engagement as an objective, and which provides an enabling environment. In terms of policy implementation, policy levers based on building and supporting capacities for change at universities (using 'developmental' rather than 'judgemental' tools) are the ones most likely to work – with the example of the approach to supporting community engagement in the U.S. being a case in point. A recent project-based initiative to develop a European framework for community engagement in higher education was presented as a potentially promising initiative that followed this kind of developmental approach.

The next and final chapter presents in further detail a series of specific policy recommendations for the European Commission, for Member States and for other stakeholders.

Chapter 5. Conclusions, policy approaches and policy recommendations

5.1. A vision for community engagement in European higher education

This report has argued (based on a comprehensive literature review) that universities play a crucial role in responding to societal needs, and can further enhance their societal impact at local, national or international levels through community engagement.

Community engagement has been a core component of higher education for centuries. Although European institutions have been no exception to this, higher education systems on other continents (such as North America and Latin America) have more prominently emphasised community engagement as a core mission of higher education. Although higher education in Europe has seen a rise in 'third mission' activities over recent decades, the focus of these activities has been on supporting economic development rather than addressing broader societal needs.

Envisioning the future of higher education in Europe with this background in mind, the optimal scenario would be one in which universities are open, inclusive and responsive institutions that systematically engage with external communities to address pressing societal needs, resulting in societal impact. This vision implies that community engagement is not an 'added extra' but is integrated into teaching, research and other university activities. This, in turn, implies that community engagement is not carried out as a result of policy pressures, administrative regulations or even out of a sense of moral responsibility, but that it becomes a part of standard academic practice – that is, it becomes integral to what is understood as 'good teaching' and 'good science'.

This vision represents a paradigm shift compared to the dominant university culture in Europe. But the paradigm that needs shifting is not the lack of community engagement itself – it is rather the lack of *recognition* of community engagement as a valuable objective and activity by universities and policymakers. The paradigm shift therefore involves overturning the current state of affairs in which many academics may feel reluctant to engage due to other pressures on their career development, while those who do engage may feel demotivated by the lack of recognition given to such work as being valuable and academically robust.

Ultimately, community engagement will continue to take place, irrespective of whether or not any active support exists for it at policy level. The vision presented here, however, is that providing community engagement with due recognition and support will allow universities to mobilise their resources in order to achieve a much greater positive impact in addressing Europe's pressing societal needs.

Before defining the policy approaches and recommendations, it is worth clarifying (based on Farnell et al., forthcoming) and demystifying what 'mainstreaming' community engagement does and does not mean in practice for European universities:

Table 5.1: Clarifying the characteristics of community-engaged universities

Being a community-engaged university ...	
... implies that community engagement is considered to be <i>one</i> of the university's key goals or missions, and one that enriches the university knowledge process while bringing tangible benefits to community partners.	... does not imply that community engagement is necessarily the <i>primary</i> goal or mission of the university, superseding goals related to, for example, research intensity or internationalisation.
... implies carrying out community engagement activities that depend entirely on <i>context</i> , including: the type of institution, its external environment and its communities.	... does not imply conforming to 'one size fits all' guidelines that prescribe specific community engagement activities.
... implies that community engagement activities are carried out in a variety of ways (and with varying intensity) in different disciplines across the university. Academics ultimately retain the autonomy to determine how to organise their community engagement activities.	... does not imply that certain types of community engagement can (or should) be carried out equally in different departments or disciplines within the university.
... implies that there is evidence that many academics are community-engaged (even if they are a minority).	... does not imply that the majority of academic staff should necessarily be community-engaged.
... implies that the community-engaged activities implemented by a university's staff bring <i>additional</i> value to the university and its communities.	... does not imply that university teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities that are <i>not</i> community-engaged are of less value.

Source: Extract from table in Farnell et al., forthcoming

5.2. Policy approaches: from changing framework conditions to bottom-up initiatives

In this section, we consider different future policy approaches to support community engagement in higher education. Each approach displays a different level of ambition in terms of its expected outcomes, ranging from achieving system-level transformation to maintaining the status quo. The policy approaches, presented in the Table 5.2 below, are generic and could be applied to transnational, national or regional levels. The approaches are presented in order of the magnitude of the expected impact. They are based on the conclusions in Chapter 4 regarding the obstacles to community engagement.

Table 5.2: Policy approaches for community engagement in higher education

Policy approach	Description
Approach 1: High-level policy priority; transforming framework conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This ambitious policy approach aims at the <u>system-level embedding</u> of community engagement within higher education. ▪ Community engagement is incorporated as an explicit objective or principle of national policy. ▪ The policy ensures that changes are made to the framework conditions for higher education and research, since the existing priorities, policies and practices in other parts of the system (e.g. in university staff policies, in research assessment) are indirect obstacles to community engagement. ▪ Funding is used to influence and drive engagement
Approach 2: High-level policy priority; targeted supportive policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This policy approach aims to increase the <u>prevalence and quality</u> of community engagement activities by universities throughout the higher education system. ▪ Community engagement is incorporated as an explicit objective or principle in strategic documents. ▪ Targeted policies are designed to incentivise and support universities to develop their community engagement.
Approach 3: Programme-level priority;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This policy approach aims to improve the <u>quality</u> of community engagement activities at university level.

incorporation into existing programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community engagement is not defined as an explicit objective or principle in strategic documents, and no new policies or programmes are developed to specifically support such engagement. However, community engagement is included as a thematic priority within existing programmes in the area of higher education and research.
Approach 4: Status quo - no direct priority; bottom-up initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In this approach, there are no direct signals from the policy level that community engagement is a priority, apart from <u>general references to 'relevance' and 'impact'</u>. ▪ Universities will continue to find creative ways to fund and develop their projects, including through initiatives led by university leaders and management, through university-level funding, through the use of existing national and international funding programmes, and through the bottom-up initiatives of academics, students and communities.

Considering these approaches, any policy measures aimed at supporting community engagement in higher education (including through its incorporation into existing programmes) is likely to have a positive impact at specific institutions and their communities.

Achieving a sustainable, system-level increase in university-community engagement, however, requires this objective to be incorporated as a priority of the higher education and research system, underpinned by an environment that enables engagement, including by removing legal, administrative and financial obstacles (such as system-level policies relating to academic staff recruitment, promotion and tenure, or to the criteria for research assessment).

The recommendation of the author of this report is that Approach 2 and Approach 3 should be considered as a first phase to support the institutionalisation of community engagement, with Approach 1 being an aspirational future scenario.

5.3. Framing the policy: connections and synergies with other policy areas

Whichever policy approach is selected, policymakers will need to decide how to frame community engagement within existing policies, and how to connect it to parallel initiatives. In the case of community engagement, this question is complex, since it overlaps with many policy areas and thematic priorities. The framing of the policy therefore involves making decisions about three distinct elements.

1) Promoting joined-up governance with other policy areas

Joined-up governance describes the coordination, development and implementation of a policy across different public policy structures and institutions. A coherent policy approach to community engagement should, at the very least, involve coordination between higher education and research policy, but would additionally benefit from being connected with other policy areas. In the case of community engagement, the following policy areas can be identified:

- Higher education (and links to pre-tertiary education)
- Research and innovation
- Industrial policy and regional development
- Social policy (social cohesion/inclusion)
- Climate and energy
- Youth, active citizenship

In addition, community engagement can be closely connected to the horizontal policy initiative of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which the EU and its Member States have committed to reach by 2030 and which connect a broad range of policy areas. The relationship between the SDGs and community engagement is mutually supportive: the

SDGs provide a high-level platform encouraging universities to respond to the needs of their external communities (both locally and globally); while community engagement provides the central method for universities to effectively contribute to meeting the SDGs locally and globally – i.e. through partnerships with a range of communities that can benefit from their support.

2) Establishing a clear relationship with other third mission priorities within higher education policy

Within higher education policy, community engagement fits most logically into ‘third mission’ policies, beyond teaching and research. As emphasised in this report, however, it should be noted that the use of the term ‘third mission’ does not imply a third, parallel activity. Rather, it implies the horizontal integration of community engagement into teaching, research and other university activities. There remains, however, a dilemma regarding how to relate community engagement to other aspects of the university’s third mission (i.e. innovation, entrepreneurship, technology transfer, etc.). In effect, two policy options are available:

1. Community engagement as a new priority/new strand of the third mission of higher education.
2. A single, integrated policy on the third mission of higher education, combining economic development and community engagement.

The recommendation of this report is that there would be little added value in incorporating community engagement into a single, all-encompassing approach to the third mission of higher education, for the following reasons:

- This report argues that one specific aspect of the third mission was pushed to the periphery in policy and practice: community engagement. While proponents of universities’ role in economic development would also argue that there are significant challenges and room for improvement in universities’ business engagement (Davey et al., 2018), there remains a range of infrastructures and measures that have been in place since the 1980s to support this policy objective (Benneworth, 2018). This is not the case for community engagement, and amalgamating community engagement into a broader framework that is overwhelmingly dominated by the topic of economic development would effectively be the same as continuing with the current status quo.
- International practices and policies have shown that community engagement and engagement focused on the economy, innovation and entrepreneurship are effectively two parallel movements and initiatives. This does not mean that they do not share numerous similarities and, indeed, overlaps: both involve partnerships with external stakeholders, work-based student placements and collaborative research, and both share the vision of universities contributing to societal development. At national level, however, examples from the UK, Ireland and Spain provided in Chapter 1 demonstrate that the contributions of universities to public benefits are seen as a distinct policy area from supporting innovation and business engagement. This is perhaps most obvious in the case of the U.S. practices described in this report, from the national Campus Compact network to the national Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. At a global level, thematic networks also distinguish between these two areas, The Talloires Network, for example, focuses on community-engaged universities, unlike a network such as the University-Industry Innovation Network. Finally, the discussion in Chapter 4 on the differences between the ‘entrepreneurial’ and the ‘engaged’ or ‘civic’ university, also confirms this approach (as noted in e.g. Goddard et al., 2016 and Kliewe et al., 2019).

The recommendation to distinguish in policy between economically driven engagement and community engagement does not imply that one is more important than the other. Instead, this recommendation aims to reinstate community engagement as an aspect of the third mission of universities that should at least be of equal importance to the fostering of economic development.

3) Identifying priorities in higher education and research policy

A policy to support community engagement should ensure policy coherence and horizontal connections with existing thematic priorities in higher education and research. In the table below, we present an initial mapping of the potential overlaps and synergies between community engagement and specific priorities within higher education, research and other policy areas. A more detailed table explaining these connections is included as Annex II to this report.

Table 5.3: Overlaps and synergies between community engagement and other thematic priorities in higher education and research

Higher education policy	Research and innovation policy	Other policy areas with links to higher education and research
<p><u>Strong overlaps and synergies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching and learning ▪ Relevance of higher education ▪ Social dimension/social inclusion in higher education ▪ Universities and the sustainable development goals <p><u>Potential overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality assurance ▪ Internationalisation 	<p><u>Strong overlaps and synergies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (Societal) impact of research ▪ Responsible research and innovation (RRI); citizen science; science education/communication <p><u>Potential overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open innovation ▪ Research missions 	<p><u>Strong overlaps and synergies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainable Development Goals ▪ Active citizenship ▪ Social inclusion ▪ Climate and energy <p><u>Potential overlaps and synergies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional development ▪ Smart specialisation

Source: Compiled by the author, based on the detailed table in Annex II to this report.

5.4. Selecting the policy levers: from authority tools to learning tools

In Chapter 4, the following types of policy levers were identified (based on Schneider and Ingram, 1990), with examples of the types of accountability tools and other policy mechanisms to which each category would relate in the area of higher education:

- **Authority tools** (regulations, legal obligations, accreditations, audits)
- **Incentive tools** (funding incentives or reputational incentives)
- **Capacity tools** (building organisational capacity through information, training, support)
- **Symbolic and hortatory tools** (agenda-setting; awareness-raising; recognitions and awards)
- **Learning tools** (learning resources, guidelines; networks; conferences)

The conclusion of Chapter 4 is that, since community engagement is context-specific in nature and has a broad range of activities and stakeholders, any policy lever that relies on compliance with established standards or the measurement of quantitative targets (whether as an **authority tool or incentive tool**) would be inappropriate at an initial stage, since it would be unlikely to result in the desired outcome. The main argument against such tools is that they would be premature: community engagement must first be accepted as an important aspect of universities' societal contributions, which in turn results

in more academic staff accepting the value of community engagement in teaching and research. Until this occurs, any top-down approach to 'forcing' such activities will at best result in reactive rather than proactive measures by universities, focusing on meeting the targets set rather than meeting the real societal needs of the communities with which the university engages. At worst, it would result in resistance to and rejection of community engagement as an externally imposed agenda.

On the other hand, **capacity tools, symbolic/hortatory tools and learning tools** appear to be the tools best suited to supporting community engagement in higher education, at least during the initial process of making community engagement a more 'normalised' aspect of higher education in Europe. Especially when considering the use of accountability tools as a policy lever to 'measure' community engagement, the optimal approach would be to base such tools on a developmental rather than judgmental approach (using the categorisation of Townley, 1997), thereby supporting institutional change and improvement rather than measuring compliance.

Based on these conclusions, the next section presents recommendations for the European Commission, Member States and other stakeholders on policy levers to support community engagement in higher education over the next decade.

5.5. Policy recommendations

Policy recommendations for the European Commission

The European Commission has already reflected the emerging community engagement agenda in its *Renewed Agenda for Higher Education* (European Commission, 2017a), within the priority of 'Building inclusive and connected HE systems'. This notes that 'higher education institutions are not ivory towers, but civic-minded learning communities connected to their communities' (p. 6). The importance of community engagement is also implicit within the *Horizon 2020 Science with and for Society* programme (European Commission, 2017b).

The policy recommendations for the European Commission in the post-2020 period are presented in the table below, corresponding to three of the policy approaches discussed in section 5.2.

Policy approaches	Description
Approach 1: High-level policy priority; transforming framework conditions	<p>Set the societal role of universities as a priority in the future policy frameworks for higher education and research, specifically distinguishing between universities' contribution to economic development and innovation on the one hand, and broader societal development through community engagement on the other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the post-2020 policy framework(s) for higher education, reiterate and strengthen the commitment expressed in the <i>Renewed Agenda for Higher Education</i> to connect universities with their external communities. • In the post-2020 policy framework(s) for research, reiterate and strengthen the commitment to the principles of responsible research and innovation (RRI) and to citizen science.
Approach 2: High-level priority; targeted supportive policies	<p>Develop new policies and programmes to support this objective, focusing on building the capacities of European universities to be community-engaged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design new targeted funding programmes to specifically support universities in developing their community engagement. • Develop peer-learning activities for national authorities of Member States on how to develop national policies for community engagement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of a European-level tool to build the capacities of universities for community engagement, e.g. based on the TEFCE Toolbox for community engagement in higher education. • Support the development of a European-level thematic network/community of practice for community engagement.
Approach 3: Programme-level priority; incorporation into existing programmes	<p>Incorporate community engagement into existing EU programmes, tools and initiatives where there is potential for synergy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate priorities related to community engagement in higher education into existing programmes and initiatives that have a strong potential for synergy, and consider the feasibility of integrating community engagement into other existing programmes and initiatives that have potential for synergy (<i>see table below and Annex III</i>). ▪ Consider the feasibility of integrating community engagement as a sub-dimension of other European Commission initiatives relating to higher education, including in the area of teaching and learning, the relevance of higher education, social dimension/social inclusion and the Sustainable Development Goals, quality assurance and internationalisation. (<i>See Annex II for a more detailed analysis</i>).

In all three of the approaches proposed (in particular in Approach 3), the European Commission could consider the range of possible synergies that could be made with existing programmes and initiatives within higher education and research. These are summarised below (and elaborated in Annex III):

Policy	European Commission programmes and initiatives (non-exhaustive list)
Higher education policy	<p>Strong overlaps and synergies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Erasmus+</u>: incorporating community engagement as a priority within Key action 1 (Individual mobility) and Key action 2 (Strategic partnerships; European Universities Initiative: Knowledge alliances) <p>Potential overlaps and synergies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Eurydice</u>: data collection on community engagement in Member States ▪ <u>Network of Experts on the Social Dimension of Education and Training (NESET)</u>: further in-depth studies on community engagement practices ▪ <u>U-Multirank</u>: further data collection on community engagement via institutional questionnaires
Research and innovation policy	<p>Strong overlaps and synergies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon Europe)</u>: Following on from the Horizon 2020 priority <i>Science with and for Society (SwafS)</i>, provide explicit support for community engagement in research by strengthening the role of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and providing support for citizen science.
Other policy areas	<p>Strong overlaps and synergies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)</u>: using ESIF funds to foster partnerships between universities and community stakeholders to address the pressing societal needs of Member States and regions. <p>Potential overlaps and synergies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore ways to support university-community partnerships as ways to contribute to the <u>European Green Deal</u>, and within plans for the European Union's commitments to the <u>Sustainable Development Goals</u>. ▪ Consider how community engagement can be further fostered through the <u>European Institute of Technology</u> and the <u>Smart Specialisation</u> platform.

Source: Compiled by the author, based on the detailed table in Annex III to this report.

Policy recommendations for Member States

- Include community engagement as a principle and priority in future national policies in the area of higher education and research.
- Consider how to reflect such a policy priority in national regulations relating to the criteria for university staff recruitment, promotion and tenure, and in areas such as research assessment and quality assurance.
- Develop funding incentives and/or capacity-building programmes for community engagement activities at national level (e.g. through national programming of ESIF funds or through other earmarked national funding).
- Develop national initiatives, tools or organisational structures to support HEIs in community engagement (e.g. the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement in the UK).
- Support thematic networks, communities of practice and peer-learning activities related to community engagement.

Policy recommendations for international stakeholders

- Bologna Process: Incorporate community engagement in higher education as a priority within the Bologna Process through inclusion in ministerial communiqués.
- E4 group (European University Association, European Association for Institutions in Higher Education, European Student Union and European Network for Quality Assurance): Include community engagement among the priorities for higher education in the period to 2030. Consider how to better connect community engagement with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- International organisations, networks and initiatives: Consolidate, strengthen and synergise existing international networks and initiatives to support community engagement in higher education (e.g. the Global University Network for Innovation; Talloires Network; UNESCO Chair for Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education; Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education).

Policy recommendations for universities

- Include community engagement as an important principle and priority in future university mission statements or strategic plans.
- Consider how to reflect such a policy priority in university-level regulations relating to the criteria for university staff recruitment, promotion and tenure, as well as internal quality assurance assessments.
- Consider how to use national university associations/rectors' conferences to launch initiatives or resources to support HEIs in community engagement (e.g. Campus Engage in Ireland).
- Make use of resources such as the TEFCE Toolbox for community engagement in higher education to reflect on the university's current level of community engagement and potential for improvement.
- Support the launch of university-based thematic networks, communities of practice and peer-learning activities related to community engagement.
- Consider how the university organisation itself can better enable/strengthen links between community engagement and teaching and research.

5.6. Conclusions

Community engagement is an integral part of the missions of many universities and the activities of academics and students in Europe and beyond. Today, there is an urgent need for European universities to play a leading role in addressing societal challenges, from the local to the international level. This report has argued that the multi-faceted and complex nature of community engagement requires a gradual, developmental and qualitative approach to help universities achieve this objective, rather than a rushed, top-down and metrics-driven approach. For this reason, the sooner the EU and its Member States can agree to take the first steps, the better.

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Annex I: Recent initiatives supporting community engagement in higher education

International networks

Two major global networks have emerged in the last two decades that support the development of community engagement in higher education: the **Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi)** and the **Talloires Network**. Established in 1999, GUNi is an international network supported by UNESCO and the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP), comprising 231 member universities from 80 countries around the world. The network focuses on addressing the role of higher education institutions in society and how higher education can play a proactive and committed role in social transformation and positive social change. GUNi initiatives and thematic reports have focused on engagement, the socially responsible university, the future of the humanities and (most recently) the role of the SDGs in higher education (GUNi, n.d.). The Talloires Network is also an international network, comprising 393 universities and other organisations from 77 countries around the world, that is 'building a global movement of civically engaged and socially responsible higher education institutions'. The Talloires Network advocates for the expansion of civic engagement activities and promotes good practices in civic engagement (Talloires Network, n.d.).

In addition to these networks, there are international networks focusing on specific aspects of community engagement in higher education, such as the **Living Knowledge Network**, composed of persons active in or supportive of community-based research (carried out by so-called 'Science Shops'). This network, which comprises over 80 international members, aims to foster public engagement with, and participation in, all levels of the research and innovation process, with the ultimate aim of strengthening research excellence and contributing to innovation outcomes that meet the views, wishes and demands of civil society (Living Knowledge, n.d.).

European university-led and stakeholder-led initiatives

Currently, no European network exists that specifically focuses on community engagement in higher education as a whole. However, since 2018 a number of new initiatives have emerged that demonstrate a growing movement among universities that wish to address the question of how to better engage with their communities:

- **Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education (TEFCE):** this EU-funded project (2018 - 2020; www.tefce.eu) gathers experts, universities, local authorities and university networks from seven EU Member States in order to develop and pilot a European tool to support universities to better engage with their communities at local and regional levels in order to address pressing societal needs.¹²
- **University networks for community engagement in higher education:** In the last decade, 10 European countries have seen the establishment of university networks focusing on different aspects of community engagement in higher education. These networks include Campus Engage (Ireland), the Spanish University Service-Learning Association, the German Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility, and the Italian Network of Service-Learning and Community

¹² The author of this report is the coordinator of the TEFCE project, and this report is also informed by the findings of the TEFCE project.

Engagement (Cayuella et al., 2020). See Box 2 for examples of activities of two such networks.

- **European Association of Service Learning in Higher Education:** Established in 2019, this network focuses specifically on 'service-learning', which involves student placements and projects in community-based organisations as an integral part of their studies. The network comprises 28 members from 16 countries, including individual experts and the national networks for service-learning and community engagement mentioned above. The network has also launched the European Observatory for Service Learning in Higher Education, to collect and monitor data and share good practices (Cayuella et al., 2020).

Box I.1: University-led initiatives to support community engagement in two EU Member States

Ireland

In addition to a national policy framework that supports community engagement, Ireland has also seen the development of a national-level support structure for community engagement, launched by the Irish Universities Association: **Campus Engage**. Campus Engage is a network that aims to support Irish higher education institutions to 'embed, scale and promote civic and community engagement across staff and student teaching, learning and research'. It supports the development of four core activities: community-based teaching and learning, engaged research and innovation for societal impact, student volunteering, and 'planning for impact', i.e. building a national framework to evaluate the social impact of community engagement (Campus Engage, n.d.).

Spain

There has been a steady increase in the practice of community-based learning at Spanish universities over the past few decades (Opazo, Aramburuzabala and Cerrillo, 2016). The national **University Service-learning Association** (*Asociación de Aprendizaje-Servicio Universitario* - ApSU) was created in 2017 with the aim of strengthening collaboration in, and exchange of, service-learning experiences, disseminating educational and social projects based on this methodology, promoting research and supporting the institutionalisation of service-learning at Spanish universities. At the level of Spain's Autonomous Regions, the **Association of Catalan Public Universities** (*Associació Catalana d'Universitats Públiques*, ACUP) stands out as an example of a university association with a strong commitment to linking universities with society. ACUP coordinates a range of activities to support Catalan universities in addressing societal needs, such as how to address SDGs. It chairs the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI), which has a strong focus on university engagement, and it has commissioned a report on the 'Social Value of Public Universities in Catalonia' (ACUP, forthcoming). The report will analyse the contribution of the public universities of Catalonia to the wealth of the territory by employing so-called 'integrated social value methodology', which uses indicators to monetise the value of non-economic activities (e.g. the economic value of hours of voluntary work), as well as qualitative analysis through interviews with stakeholders on what value universities bring to the region.

- **European initiatives on community engagement by university networks:** Since 2017 there has been a marked increase in the visibility of the topics of the societal role of universities and community engagement among leading university networks in Europe. The **League of European Research Universities** has published position papers on the topics of citizen science (LERU, 2016), the increasing importance of the societal impact of research (LERU, 2017) and, most recently, on the role of universities in the future of Europe, with a particular focus on universities 'engaging with society and creating societal added value', including through the addressing of SDGs (LERU, 2019).

Three European conferences organised by leading European networks in last two

years have focused precisely on this topic: the **European University Association (EUA)** dedicated its 2018 annual conference to the topic of 'Engaged and Responsible Universities Shaping Europe'; the **Academic Cooperation Association** dedicated its 2019 annual conference to the topic of 'The Engaged University: Linking the Global and the Local'; while the 2019 European Quality Assurance Forum (organised by the **EUA, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, the European Student Union and the European Network for Quality Assurance**) focused on 'The Societal Engagement of Universities'. The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) also launched a new European-level project in 2020, which focuses specifically on regional engagement ('Mapping Regional Engagement Activities of European Universities of Applied Sciences')

Other notable initiatives have included two conferences organised by the **Council of Europe** on 'The Local Mission of Higher Education', as well as the **Global University Leaders Council Hamburg** (GUC Hamburg), an initiative of the German Rectors' Conference, the Körber Foundation and Universität Hamburg, which organised its 2019 conference for global university leaders on 'The Place of Universities in Society' and commissioned a study (Maasen et al., 2019) on different forms of university engagement around the globe.

- **European Universities Initiative:** The aim of this European Commission initiative launched in 2019 is to foster university cooperation 'across languages, borders and disciplines to address societal challenges and skills shortages faced in Europe' (European Commission, n.d.). The challenge-based approach is an important building block of this initiative, through which higher education in Europe will contribute to societal challenges linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. Students will work together with academics and researchers, regions, cities, businesses, civil society and citizens to co-create solutions to most pressing challenges facing our society. Among the 17 European Universities funded through the initiative (which involves 114 higher education institutions from 24 Member States), almost all the university alliances will develop interdisciplinary knowledge co-creating teams which will use a challenge-based approach for learning, teaching and research to find solutions to societal challenges. The following alliances make specific mention of connecting and engaging with citizens and local communities: CIVICA – The European University in Social Sciences (CIVICA); CIVIS – A European Civic University Alliance (CIVIS); FORTHEM - Fostering Outreach within European Regions, Transnational Higher Education and Mobility; and YUFE - Young Universities for the Future of Europe (European Commission, n.d.). Another 24 additional alliances will be selected in July 2020, which will result in more than 300 universities across the EU utilising the challenge-based approach.
- **The European Commission has also promoted the STEAM approach to STEM education in the Renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education.** The STEAM approach emphasises the importance of interdisciplinarity and intersectoral connections, as well as societal, environmental and economic relevance in STEM curricula and in learning and teaching. The STEAM approach will contribute to the community engagement of schools and higher education institutions by promoting multi-stakeholder involvement in curricula design, learning and teaching. In connection with this, education for sustainable development through the STEAM approach to STEM education is also a priority.

Annex II: Linking community engagement to other policy priorities

Table II.1: Overlaps and synergies between community engagement and other priority areas in higher education, research and other policies

Area of priority	Potential overlaps and synergies with community engagement
Higher education policy	
Teaching and learning; competences and key	<p>Strong overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions on teaching and learning should systematically include community-based learning as an innovative and impactful pedagogical tool, especially for acquiring key competences such as citizenship competence, entrepreneurship competence and personal, social and learning-to-learn competence.
Relevance	<p>Strong overlaps and synergies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions on the relevance of skills and competences should include community-based teaching and research. Discussions on the relevance of higher education could consider the extent to which universities are community-engaged.
Quality assurance	<p>Potential overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions on quality assurance in higher education have already begun to consider if and how community engagement could be integrated into internal or external quality assurance mechanisms at institutional, national or European levels (Gould and Dubbs, 2019).
Social dimension / social inclusion	<p>Strong overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement can be closely connected to the issue of access to higher education, particularly through university outreach to schools, the provision of educational programmes to non-traditional students, and through community-based learning/research with disadvantaged communities.
Sustainable development goals	<p>Strong overlaps and synergies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While SDGs could be addressed by universities without necessarily involving community engagement, the SDGs encourage innovative partnerships to meet the needs of communities. Community engagement initiatives are almost certain to address one of the SDGs (at the local or global level).
Internationalisation	<p>Potential overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions on internationalisation have begun to consider how international mobility should also involve local engagement and positive impacts on local communities (e.g. initiatives such as Social Erasmus or International Higher Education for Society).¹³
Research and innovation policy	
Innovation	<p>Potential overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of open innovation encourages dialogue with users and the co-creation of innovations. The potential for overlap is therefore significant for social innovations, which are more likely to involve community engagement in the innovation process.

¹³ See <https://socialerasmus.org/> and <https://www.ihes-conference.com/ihes>

Research missions	<p>Potential overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aim of the European Commission's new framework of 'research missions' is to engage with citizens in a continuous process for the design, monitoring and assessment of research missions that address Europe's most pressing societal challenges.
Research impact / Societal impact of research	<p>Strong overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any consideration of the societal impact of research will be directly linked with the extent to which relevant communities were meaningfully engaged during the research planning and implementation, or in the dissemination of results.
Responsible research and innovation (RRI); Citizen science; Science education/ communication	<p>Strong overlaps and synergies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connections should be made with RRI, which aims to ensure cooperation between researchers and external stakeholders in the research and innovation process. Citizen science represents an explicit example of community engagement in science, and hence should be a part of any overarching community engagement policy.
Other policy areas	
Regional development / Smart specialisation	<p>Potential overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart Specialisation Strategies focus on ways to build regional economic growth and innovation, while also addressing societal challenges. So far, the Smart Specialisation agenda has not featured many links to community engagement, and focuses on economic development. However, the move from 'triple helix' innovation (focusing primarily on technology transfer) to 'quadruple' and even 'quintuple' helix forms of innovation (incorporating civil society and environmental views and concerns) does provide a way to link Smart Specialisation Strategies to the needs of a broader set of external communities by framing a more holistic vision of what is understood by regional development. The most concrete potential for overlap is with social innovation, which is more likely to involve community engagement in its innovation process.
Active citizenship	<p>Strong overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions on the fostering of active citizenship in Europe should include the consideration of community-based learning and community-based research as ways to both build citizenship competences among students, and to build capacities for active citizenship among relevant community groups.
Sustainable Development Goals	<p>Strong overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relationship between the SDGs and community engagement is mutually supportive: the SDGs provide a high-level platform encouraging universities to respond to the needs of their external communities (both locally and globally); while community engagement provides a central method for universities to effectively contribute to the meeting SDGs locally and globally – i.e. through partnerships with a range of communities that can benefit from their support.
Climate and energy	<p>Potential overlap and synergy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of universities within the European Commission's European Green Deal will be to find innovative solutions to the challenges of climate change, including its impact on society. Community engagement could be one of the approaches employed by universities to work on researching and developing solutions to such challenges.

Annex III: Analysis of potential synergies with existing EU programmes and initiatives

Existing EU initiatives	Potential for synergy	Comment on potential for inclusion of community engagement
Programmes and initiatives		
Erasmus+	☑	<p>The post-2020 Erasmus+ programme could incorporate community engagement in a range of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key action 1 – Individual mobility</u>: This action could be used to encourage staff and student exchanges that incorporate community-based teaching and learning. • <u>Key action 2 – Strategic partnerships</u>: This action already allows for partnerships in a broad range of priorities, including to build capacity for community engagement in teaching and learning. This priority could be further emphasised in the future programme. • <u>Key action 2 – European Universities Initiative</u>: There is great potential to harness this initiative for community engagement in higher education. Several European University alliances have already made specific mention of connecting and engaging with citizens and local communities (CIVICA, CIVIS, FORTHEM and YUFE alliances). Alliances of New European Universities could be encouraged to adopt a specific focus on community engagement, or could include this topic as core joint activities. • <u>Key action 2 – Knowledge alliances</u>: The current concept of Knowledge Alliances focuses exclusively on knowledge-exchange partnerships between businesses and universities. The action could be expanded (or alternatively complemented by an additional sub-action) through the providing of equal possibilities for knowledge alliances targeted at community engagement, allowing for partnerships with civil society organisations, cultural organisations, public institutions and citizens. • <u>Key action 3 – Policy reform; Forward-looking projects</u>: Community engagement could feature as a priority in future calls encouraging governments, universities and their communities to further identify and test innovative governance solutions that would allow for closer mutually beneficial partnerships.
Horizon Europe	☑	<p>Under Horizon 2020, the programme Science with and for Society (SwafS) allowed for a range of actions to fund research addressing societal challenges, most notably by supporting the spread of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), as well as supporting citizen science, both of which have many overlaps with community engagement.</p> <p>Measures should be considered to keep the societal responsibility and engagement of research (embodied in RRI) as a central concept in post-2020 EU research policy.</p> <p>Citizen science features prominently in the Commission’s current Open Innovation policy framework, and there are indications that it will continue to feature as a priority in the post-2020 period. Synergies could be created between networks and projects on citizen science and those working more broadly on community-based research and community engagement in higher education, to identify joint challenges and potential policy solutions.</p>

European structural and investment funds (ESIF)	☑	Among ESIF funds, the European Social Fund in particular provides an opportunity for Member States and regions to address pressing societal needs through partnerships of universities and community stakeholders. An example from Croatia's use of European Social Funds in the period 2014-2020 provides an illustration: a total of 3.6 million EUR was invested to develop community-based learning partnerships between higher education institutions and civil society organisations throughout the country (Ured za udruge Vlade Republike Hrvatske, 2018)
European Institute of Technology	❓	The EIT's focus on innovations and start-ups that address grand challenges in Europe (including climate change, health, etc.) has not yet had a clear community engagement orientation. The potential, however, is clearly there: as an illustration of this potential, the EIT's Urban Mobility KIC mentions among its objectives that it will be 'anchoring a mobility transition in citizen engagement and co-creation to respond to real mobility needs and explore innovative solutions together'. The EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities could consider how to adopt a stronger 'quadruple-helix' approach, and fully include communities in their innovation process as part of a mutually beneficial approach.
Smart specialisation	❓	As mentioned in Annex II, Smart Specialisation focuses primarily on the economic development of Europe's regions, and has not yet featured many links to community engagement. However, should Smart Specialisation be framed in such a way as to address regional socioeconomic challenges in a broader way (including addressing social challenges), there may be ways to create synergies with community engagement. The most concrete potential for overlap is with social innovation, which is more likely to involve community engagement in its innovation process.
Tools		
U-Multirank	❓	Since it is based on quantitative data, U-Multirank offers limited possibilities to incorporate indicators of community engagement beyond the current (limited) indicators of 'Regional Engagement'. Indeed, an article entitled <i>Community Engagement; Can it be measured?</i> is available on U-Multirank's web site (U-Multirank, n.d.). This summarises the challenges already mentioned in this report: that 'no ranking or large-scale performance indicator system has been successful in measuring the social and cultural impact of universities on their environment'. Although U-Multirank 'isn't giving up on trying to measure community engagement', the conclusion of this report is that the both the feasibility and value of defining any quantitative indicator of community engagement are questionable. U-Multirank has since taken steps to incorporate an indicator of one specific dimension of community engagement ('Community service learning'), but the indicator in its current form is only applicable to the subject of social work and is thus limited. The U-Multirank team could consider the feasibility and benefits of expanding this indicator to all subject groups, to gain greater insight into the propensity of institutionalised community-based learning at European universities.
HEinnovate	⊗	Overlap certainly exists between the objectives of the HEinnovate tool and the topic of community engagement. In particular, the 'Knowledge Exchange' section of the tool has a broad enough scope to include engagement with organisations other than businesses. Overall, however, the HEinnovate tool has a clear emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship, and thus appears better suited to universities with a primary focus on innovation and business engagement, rather than universities with a stronger focus on community engagement. The conclusion of this report, based on the characteristics of community engagement, is that it would be more effective to treat innovation/business engagement and community engagement as two parallel tracks, rather than incorporating both into one tool.

Data		
Eurostat	⊗	No meaningful statistical data could be collected at the moment on community engagement from EU Member States.
European Tertiary Education Register	⊗	There is no clear mechanism to include community engagement in the ETER database, due to a lack of meaningful statistical data
Eurydice	⊕	A thematic survey of Member States and a resulting report on community engagement initiatives in higher education would be feasible, and could be considered in order to provide an insight into the various forms and levels of community engagement across Europe. The challenge, however, is that without prior measures to promote, support and monitor community engagement in Member States, it is unlikely that national ministries responsible for higher education would be able to compile sufficient data on community engagement at system level.
Eurostudent, Eurograduate	⊗	Including questions relating to the community-based learning experiences of students or graduates during their studies would be technically possible. The question is how high would be the quality of the data collected, and what value such data would bring to policymakers, higher education institutions or researchers interested in supporting community engagement in higher education. At best, the data could provide an indication of the propensity for community-based learning in Europe. Issues such as the type or quality of community-based learning and its outcomes would be missed, as would data about how embedded are such activities at particular universities. The aforementioned thematic survey of universities via Eurydice would therefore be a preferable option.
Network on the Social Dimension of Education and Training (NESET)	⊙	The European Commission's NESET network of experts could represent a valuable source of additional studies on the various forms community engagement takes in different contexts. NESET could carry out further studies to examine the benefits of community-based learning and success factors for the introduction of community engagement in higher education.

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