



UCT Knowledge Co-op 2019 Quality Assurance report

October 2020

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Overview:

During 2020 we conducted the sixth round of our quality assurance process with stakeholders of the UCT Knowledge Co-op. We followed a two-tiered approach:

- **Impact assessment:**

A questionnaire at least one year after completion of the project assesses any practical impact of the projects. This includes raising awareness, changed policy or practice, access to funding. Feedback from nine community partners was requested; only one responded.

Emails were sent to 22 academics and past students (where traceable) to request details of academic outputs (publications, conference papers, further research) resulting from projects they were involved with a year or more ago.

- **End-Of-Project-Evaluation:**

Questionnaires were sent out at or soon after completion of the project. These projects were either of:

- a. Student theses at Honours and Masters level; here all stakeholders, i.e. community partners, students and academic supervisors are surveyed;
- b. A smaller number of short projects involving compulsory community service; in these cases, no academics are involved in the partnership.

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

23 projects were targeted; we received feedback from 8 Academics, 8 Community Partners and 13 Students. Over 90% of responses in the Quantitative section were in the *Agree* or *Agree strongly* category and the bulk of Qualitative comments were also positive. Generally feedback on the short projects was slightly less positive.

The following pages summarise the feedback received to both assessments.

1. Impact Assessment

a. Impact reported in the Academic realm

To assess impact in the academic sphere we requested feedback from each academic supervisor – and those students we could still reach – on publications, conference papers, further research or personal impact that resulted from Knowledge Co-op projects they had been involved in. Due to the slow progress into publications we included here projects from the period since the start of the Co-op, i.e. **2011 to date**.

In total out of 71 projects for which we requested information we received feedback on 59; 20 of these yielded some impact to date. Some further book chapters and articles are pending publication.

The following Outputs were reported (UCT students or academics' names appear in **bold**):

1. Seven published articles:

W Barnett, G Patten, B Kerschberger, K Conradie, DB Garone, G van Cutsem & **CJ Colvin** (2013). Perceived adherence barriers among patients failing second-line antiretroviral therapy in Khayelitsha, South Africa. *S Afr J HIV Med* 14(4):170-176. DOI:10.7196 /SAJHIVMED.981;

D Learmonth, S Hakala & M Keller (2015). "I can't carry on like this": barriers to exiting the street-based sex trade in South Africa. *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine*, 3(1), 348-365.

B Conradie, I L Hansen & M Oosthuizen (2018). Experiences with and the viability of a recycling pilot project in a Cape Town township, *Development Southern Africa*, DOI: 10.1080/0376835X.2018.1484699.

S Hendricks, N Conrad, TS Douglas, T Mutsvangwa (2018). Design thinking for Health innovation: assessing stakeholder participation. *Healthcare: The Journal of Delivery Science and Innovation*. 6(3):191-196.

S M Peters, S Kessi & F Boonzaier (2019). Narrative identity: the construction of dignified masculinities in Black male sex workers' narratives. *Social Dynamic* 45:3, 425-441.

D van der Westhuizen, N Conrad, TS Douglas & T Mutsvangwa (2020). Engaging Communities on Health Innovation: Experiences in Implementing Design Thinking. *International Quarterly of Community Health Education*, 0272684X19900880.

M Goemans, AD van Breda & S Kessi, 2020. Experiences of Young People Preparing to Transition Out of Cluster Foster Care in South Africa, *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00704-1>

2. Two book chapters

F Boonzaier (2019). Researching sex work. Doing decolonial, intersectional narrative analysis. In J. Fleetwood, L. Presser, S. Sandberg & T. Ugelvik (eds), *The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

N Conrad, TEM Mutsvangwa, A Doyle, T Saidi, TS Douglas (2019). User-Centred Design in a Health Innovation Course to Address Hearing Loss in the Elderly. In *Biomedical Engineering for Africa*. Ed: TS Douglas. Open UCT Publications.

3. One study contributed insights towards a published article with a wider scope:

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

4. An academic acted as advisor for research and the resulting article:

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

5. Two CSSR working papers:

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

M Fainman & B Conradie (2019). "Wild-harvesting fynbos flowers: Still a viable business?". CSSR Working paper 444

6. Six conference presentations by the academic supervising the study:

D Learmonth, Paper at the International Critical Psychology Conference, Grahamstown, 2015; presentations in Athens & New York on Exiting the street-based sex trade.

Kathard, H & Pillay, M. (2016) "Demystifying Decolonization and implications for professional practice", SASLHA conference, JhB, October 2016.

N Conrad, T Mutsvangwa, A Doyle & T Douglas (2016). "User-centred Design as used in Health Innovation and Design: Addressing Hearing loss in the Elderly." Biomedical Engineering Society Annual Meeting, October 2016, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

F Boonzaier, C Squire. "Health as social citizenship: Rethinking health research and social research in South African contexts". International Society of Critical Health Psychology Conference, Grahamstown, 2015; presentations in Athens & New York.

F Ross, "The First Thousand Days: temporality, gender and futurity." Paper presented at 2019 Finnish Anthropological Society Conference "On Time". Helsinki, August 29–30, 2019 & Gendered Temporalities: Anthropological Perspectives Symposium. Aarhus, Denmark, 26-27 August 2019.

N Conrad, R Gitou, T Mutsvangwa, TS Douglas (2019). "Improving medication adherence in the elderly: design thinking for inclusive solutions". XVII Triple Helix Conference 2019, 9-10th September 2019, Cape Town, South Africa

7. Five conference presentations by Masters students; and three more by both supervisor and students:

Z Ndzendze (2014). "Breast is best: Understanding the low breastfeeding rate in the Western Cape". Anthropology Southern Africa Annual Conference, 29 June - 2 July 2014, Rhodes University – Grahamstown.

Z Ndzendze (2016). "The Role of Trust in Childcare". Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines Conference, 15 – 18 November 2016, University of Cape Town.

Z Ndzendze (2016). "Luring the Infant to Life". Anthropology Southern Africa Annual Conference, 30 September - 2 October 2016, University of Venda.

S Peters (2016). "'But Sex Work is Good but I don't want to Do It': Black Men's Narratives of Selling Sex". Presentation, Narrative Enquiry for Social Transformation Colloquium, 6 October 2016, Melville, Johannesburg.

K Marais (2016). Presented the Mothers Matter research at the Western Cape Government Dept of Health, Provincial Research Day: "The First 1000 Days", as well as at the Anthropology Southern Africa Annual Conference.

M Harty, H Kathard, J Le Roux, P Parusnath, & M Orrie (2016). "Townmouse and country mouse go to school. Describing the communication environments in rural and urban settings in South Africa", IALP, Dublin, 2016;

H Kathard, M Harty, M Orrie & P Parusnath (2016) "Lost in translation. The importance of a pilot study in refining the methodology for observing multilingual classroom communication environments", IALP, Dublin, 2016.

S Pitcher & F Boonzaier (2019). "Invisibility and hypervisibility: Methodological reflections on Photovoice from a photo-narrative project with transgender youth", Psychological Society of South Africa Congress, Johannesburg 3-6 Sep 2019

8. *Longer-term engagement / personal development:*

One academic continued her research with the community partner for years; another became a Board member of the NGO she was introduced to.

A 3-year NRF-funded study with the same NGO developed from a project.

In another case there is an application (pending due to COVID-19 delays) for an NRF grant as follow-up to a Masters dissertation.

Follow-up studies were developed to deepen the findings of three projects.

Two students went on to do their PhD at international universities in the same field.

One project created an awareness in both students involved in it, who were subsequently much involved in NGO initiatives; it also helped prepare them for opportunities in the corporate world.

One student reported that her thesis research equipped her with skills and perspectives for her subsequent position as a Qualitative Research Analyst.

b. Impact reported by Community Partners (n = 1)

At least one year after completion of projects we sent questionnaires to community partners asking for feedback on the impact of the project in the community realm. This may include raising awareness, changing public policy or helping organisations secure funding.

We targeted nine projects and received feedback from only one of them. This is likely due to COVID 19, which seriously impacted many of our partners – some have closed down and others are overwhelmed by responding to the impact of the pandemic on their beneficiary communities.

This section of the report summarises the response:

RAISING AWARENESS:

The respondent *agreed* that the project results helped raise awareness of the issue more widely. Specifically, it got people in the community talking about a sensitive topic that was usually avoided.

IMPROVEMENTS IN AN EXISTING POLICY, PROGRAMME OR SERVICE:

The respondent *agreed* that the project results led to improvements in an existing service: a new girls club was formed where they spend time talking about puberty and how to make good choices in life. In addition the girls claimed their agency and spoke to the principal of the school about their needs in this regard.

The project did not INCREASE CAPACITY TO GET PROJECT FUNDING.

THE MOST IMPORTANT IMPACT OF THE PROJECT:

Here the respondent mentioned again the value of getting the girls to talk about their challenges at school and their desire to form a girls' club where they can get together and chat openly about the challenges they are facing.

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

All projects completed during the course of 2019 academic year were included in the QA process. Each stakeholder received a link to an online questionnaire to assess the following areas:

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

There were 4 options for assessing each statement in these sections (*Agree strongly, Agree, Disagree, Disagree strongly*).

Respondents also gave *qualitative* feedback on the most useful aspect of the project and suggested improvements.

a. Responses from Academics: n = 8

OUTCOMES:

- Academics *agreed* that the outcomes of the projects represented significant academic research.
- Academics *agreed*, half of them *strongly*, that outputs were consistent with overall objectives of the projects.
- Academics *agreed* that expectations of project partners were met.

STUDENTS:

Academics *agreed* / *agreed strongly* agreed that:

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

EXPERIENCE:

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

COMMITMENT

- Academics *agreed*, most of them *strongly*, that both Knowledge Co-op staff and community partners showed satisfactory commitment to project
- Most academics *strongly agreed* that they themselves showed satisfactory commitment to the project, while three chose the "*Does not apply*" option.

THE MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT WAS:

- Learning how to engage with a community partner – and learning from those running it.
- Students benefitted from a different kind of learning, applying their skills to a real-world problem.
- The partnership with parties that were fully committed to the project.
- Benefitting the outside partner and its beneficiaries, who gained important insights.

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

- Some students need help to develop the soft skills for their appropriate engagement with the community partner.
- Better preparation in the organisation where the internship took place.
- “The weaknesses were in how the student team formed and operated. They need more support from me as the academic, and not on the Knowledge Co-op's side.”
- “I had no involvement with the community partner, nor was I kept abreast of developments. And maybe that's appropriate.”

b. Responses from Community Partners (CP): n = 6

OUTCOMES:

- Community Partners *strongly agreed* that outputs met their needs and that the final report received was understandable.
- Community partners had mixed views on whether the outcome contained significant academic research, *three agreed (one strongly), one disagreed* and for two that issue was *not relevant*.
- Most *agreed*, four of them *strongly*, that the outcome was consistent with overall objectives.

STUDENTS:

- Community partners *agreed* that the projects improved student's ability to perform research.
- All CPs *agreed* that the students developed insights into the nature of the CP's work.

EXPERIENCE:

- All Community partners *agreed* that they were satisfied with how the project ran.
- They also *agreed* that students received adequate supervision during the project.
- Most *agreed strongly* that the expectation of all involved were met.

INVOLVEMENT:

- Community partners *agreed*, most of them *strongly*, that forming a partnership was beneficial to all; and that students showed satisfactory commitment to the project.
- In all cases where academic supervisors were involved, the CPs *agreed* that they showed satisfactory commitment to the project.
- Community partners also *agreed strongly* that they themselves as well as the Knowledge Co-op staff showed satisfactory commitment.

THE MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT WAS:

Here it was clearly the findings/outputs of the projects that were most valuable. CPs reported valuing:

- The findings of the study that can be used to increase understanding of the issue;
- The report or client feedback in the output is helpful as it informs the programme design;
- The manual produced and the possibility of updating it;
- The study acknowledges the programme and its potential to effect change.

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

- A feedback session to study participants.
- Had the researcher been able to increase the sample size or included more open-ended questions for 'richer' data, while accepting that this was determined by the course requirements.

FURTHER COMMENTS:

- “We really value this partnership with UCT Knowledge Co-op. It is low maintenance, high outcomes.”
- Appreciation for the “commitment, passion and effort” shown by the student, and her ongoing involvement with the organisation.

c. Responses from Students: n = 7

OUTPUTS:

- All students *agree*, half of them *strongly*, that outputs were of significant academic value, met community partner needs and were consistent with the overall objectives (with one *disagreeing* on the latter).
- Most of them *agree strongly* that their research ability improved through project involvement (though one chose “*does not apply*” here) and that they developed knowledge into how community partners work.

EXPERIENCE:

- Generally, students *agree* that participants were satisfied with how their project ran, with one *disagreeing*.
- They also *agreed*, most of them *strongly*, that they received appropriate supervision.

INVOLVEMENT:

- Generally, students *agreed*, half of them *strongly*, that elements of involvement in the partnership were very solid and were beneficial to all involved. One student was *dissatisfied* with her own commitment.
- All students *agreed*, most of them *strongly*, that there was satisfactory commitment to their project by the community partner, their academic supervisors and that the Knowledge Co-op provided satisfactory support.

OPEN ENDED VIEWS ON VALUABLE ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT:

- “Learning about a community of people that I would otherwise not have met.”
- Connecting with an amazing community partner and learning from them “added a very special dimension to my LLM”.
- Forming contacts for future reference to an issue important to them.
- Being able to give feedback to a CP that was regarded as valuable for improving their services.
- “The Knowledge Co-op is overall very supportive in all technical issues and it makes the partnership smoother.”

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

- A meeting with everyone involved right in the beginning.
- More and appropriate supervision from both the community organisation and the university could have improved the experience and outcome of the internship.
- Including a feedback loop for CP staff.

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

These are unsupervised community service projects by Information Systems Honours students or Architecture undergraduates. Engagement with the CP happens for a limited time as students spend only 30 hours or even less for the whole project.

A shorter questionnaire was sent to both students and community partners involved; no academics are directly involved in the projects. Out of six projects, involving 18 students working in teams, we received six student responses. Only two Community partners responded, possibly as they had already submitted a confidential report on the experience.

OUTPUTS:

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

EXPERIENCE:

- Most respondents *agreed* that their projects ran satisfactorily and that their expectations were met, with one *disagreeing* in each case.
- Most *strongly agreed* that the partnership was beneficial to all with satisfactory commitment from students (with two *disagreeing*), community partners (one *strongly disagreed*) and the Knowledge Co-op.

THE MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT:

- Contributing to the community while also learning and experiencing new things.
- The real-life work experience - applying theory to a practical example.

HOW THE INITIAL PROJECT CAN BE IMPROVED:

- The limited time places a huge constraint on what projects can achieve.
- Clear briefing on the project and guidance about how to engage with the community partner.
- More meetings between students and community partners.