

Service-learning and Community Engagement as an Integrated Academic Core Activity in South Africa

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SAHECEF

SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORUM

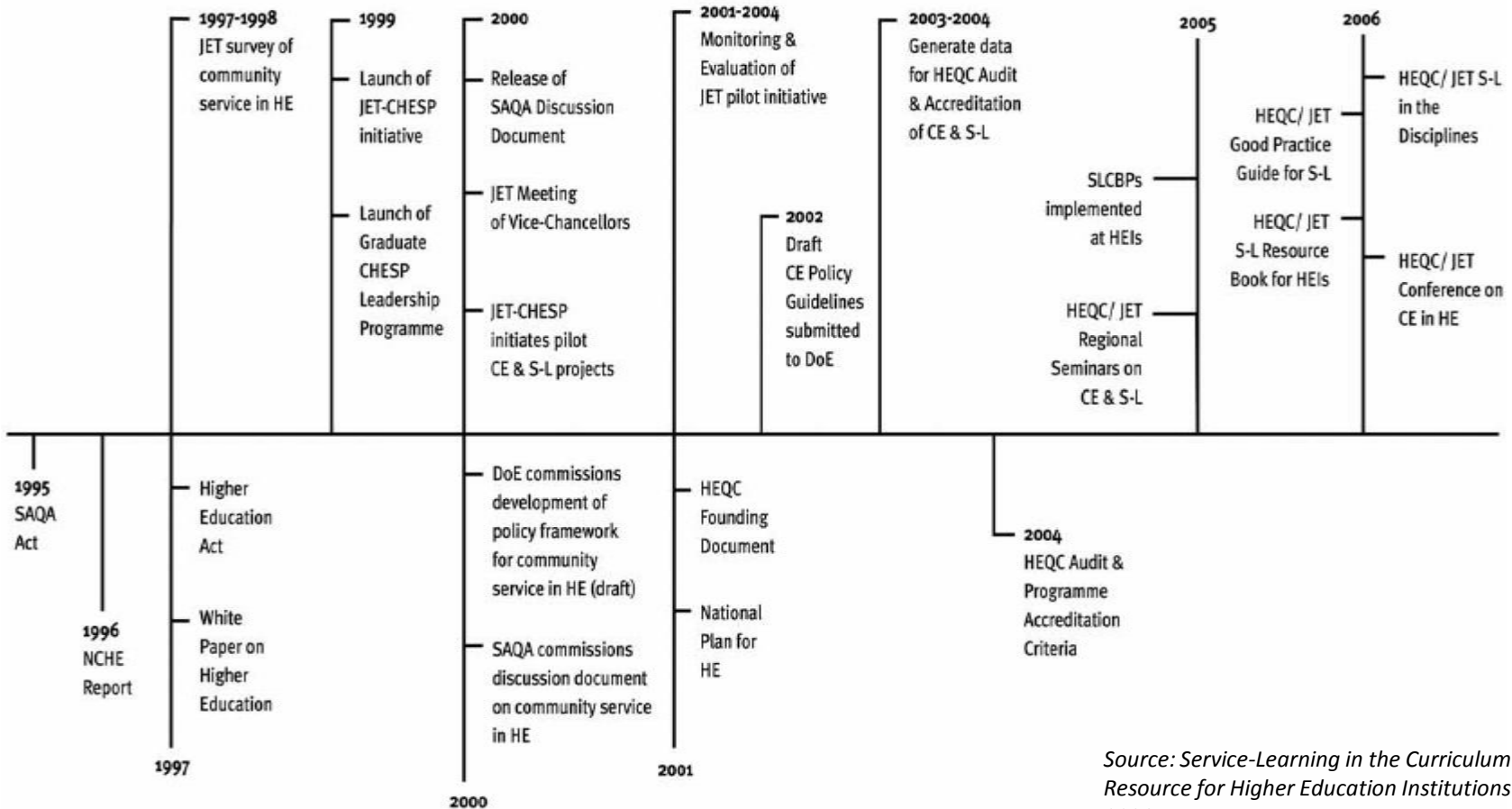


When and how did your network emerge?

- **1994 -2006 : Various initiatives with JET-CHESP-HEQC *See timeline.***
- **Bantry Bay Conference– Symposium on CE,
(6 September 2006)**
- **NatCEMF -Nov. 2008: Meeting at Stellenbosch Institute for
Advanced Studies (STIAS) at Stellenbosch University and next
consultation at University of Free State (UFS) May 2009**
- **SAHECEF constituted launch at Mangosuthu University of
Technology (MUT) with all stakeholders, 1-2 Nov. 2009, Durban**
- **Inaugural Board meeting, SAHECEF, 1 Dec. 2009 at University of
Johannesburg.**

When and how was SL spread in your region?

1994 ← National Community Engagement and Service-Learning Initiatives – JET/ CHESP → 2006



Source: *Service-Learning in the Curriculum A Resource for Higher Education Institutions*, CHE, 2006.

1994 ← Key higher education policy initiatives in South Africa → 2006


Starting out on the SAHECEF Journey 2009



NATIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGERS' FORUM STIAS, 18 NOV. 2008



SAHECEF LAUNCH, MUT, 1-3 NOV. 2009

42 **higher learning** RESEARCH brought to you by UNISA  Mail & Guardian November 2009

Innovation and learning: share and share alike

Research has little relevance unless applied outside the boundaries of academia. **Nicola Jenvey** reports

The South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum, launched in Durban earlier this month, aims to become the authoritative voice on how universities, their staff and students should interact with the communities they work and do research in.

The discussion group at the launch included representatives from the country's 23 higher education institutions, as well as the independent Monash South Africa, a wholly owned subsidiary of Australian-based Monash University.

According to Mangosuthu University of Technology professor and steering committee member Allan Feni Lapa, research has little relevance unless it is applied outside the boundaries of academia to improve the communities within its influence.

By working with the Higher Education and the Higher Education Quality Committee, the forum hopes to play a role in enabling this.

The 1997 White Paper on the transformation of higher education states that community engagement – formerly known as outreach – is one of the primary purposes of university education.

With research and development and teaching and learning, community engagement is regarded as "an integral and core part of South African higher education." The paper urges institutions to "demonstrate social responsibility and their commitment to the common good by making available expertise and infrastructure for community service programmes".

Constitutionally, the forum is committed to promoting, supporting, monitoring, coordinating and consolidating community engagement within the country's higher education institutions. This includes furthering community engagement to ensure the efforts are economically and socially sustainable.

University of the Western Cape professor Priscilla Daniels said the forum needs to recognise the milestones South Africa has already conquered in community engagement. But, it needs to apply available evidence and take cognisance of best practice to translate that work into tangible outcomes.

"There are vast amounts of innovation not being shared and adjusting that balance means establishing a central access point across the institutions," Daniels said.

University of the Free State representative and steering committee chairperson Kirpis Jaftha said community engagement should play an important role in higher education. But, learning from international experiences, the philosophy locally had to take cognisance of South Africa's history and experiences.

"South Africa cannot import and impose a community engagement model in the same way as happened with outcomes-based education," Jaftha said.

One of the forum's goals is to set standards for community engagement and put pressure on institutions to build capacity and community service.

"This will develop areas of excellence within the communities rather than covert communities into laboratories," Daniels said.

In assessing community engagement partnerships, University of Pretoria representative Gemma van Niekerk highlighted the importance of role players benefiting from the relationships founded.

A mind-set shift that incorporates the traditional role players – universities, companies and NGOs – should embrace the community so that it is not viewed as a separate entity. "For everyone to get something out of it, relationships have to be integrated and mutually beneficial," Van Niekerk said.

Forum representatives were concerned about the demands put on volunteer students and staff members who were working towards enabling community engagement. University of Stellenbosch representative Michelle Pieterse proposed developing service-level agreements to recognise the hard work of volunteers.

Although the forum met for three days, members failed to finalise the constitution, rejected the proposed logo and were unable to decide on the number and geographic spread of the executive committee. The delegates hope to conclude these issues within a month.

Community engagement is an integral part of South Africa's higher education

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From left: Jerome Smanat, Kirpis Jaftha, Denver Hendricks, Allan Feni Lapa, Priscilla Daniels and Boris Bosman are part of the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum. Photo: Rogan Ward

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORMATION OF BOARD IN MAIL & GUARDIAN, DEC. 2009



When and how was SL spread in your region?

Bi-annual SAHECEF board meetings, workshop meetings, seminars, symposia and round table discussions

- **Working Groups** for Management of CE, Volunteerism, Service-learning, Research and Partnerships
- Focused **capacity building and advocacy**
- Partnered **Conference with Fort Hare University, Rhodes University and NRF- East London, 8- 9 Nov. 2011**
- A **conference** for National Research foundation funded academics in Community Engagement Bellville, Cape Town at CPUT, 30 Nov. & 1 Dec. **2014**
- A partnered **International Conference** with Stellenbosch University, and the Talloires Network at Spier, Stellenbosch, 2- 4 Dec. **2014**
- Various international conferences and feedback from participants
- A recent **international conference** at the University of Mmpumalanga, from 2-6 December **2019**. The theme of the Conference: Re-imagining Higher Education through Community Engagement - *“Are we creating an enabling environment for engaged scholars?”*

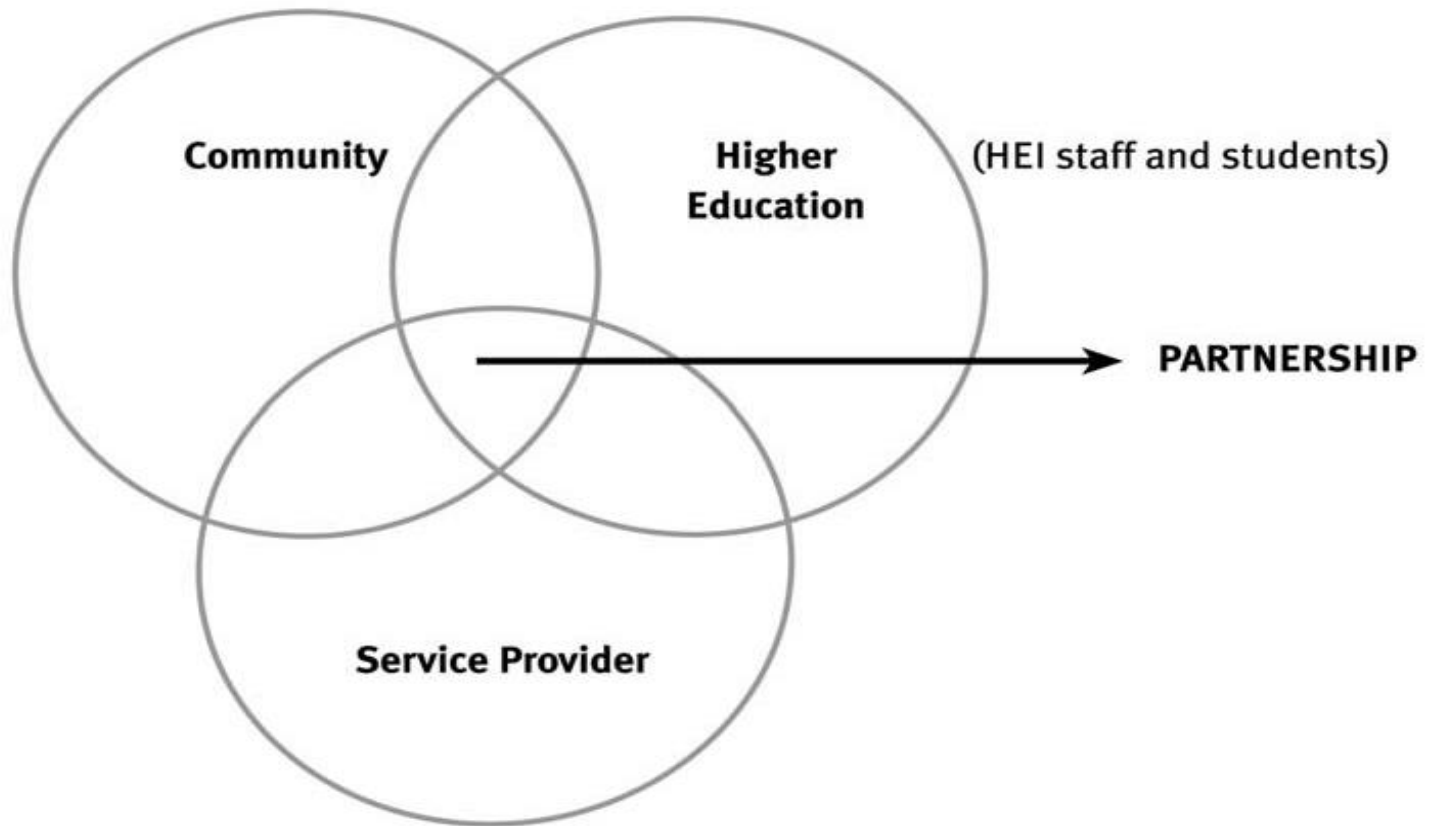
What definition of service-learning do you manage in your region/country?

Community engagement – Initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the institution in the areas of teaching and research are applied to address issues relevant to its community. Community engagement typically finds expression in a variety of forms, ranging from informal and relatively unstructured activities to formal and structured academic programmes addressed at particular community needs (service learning programmes).

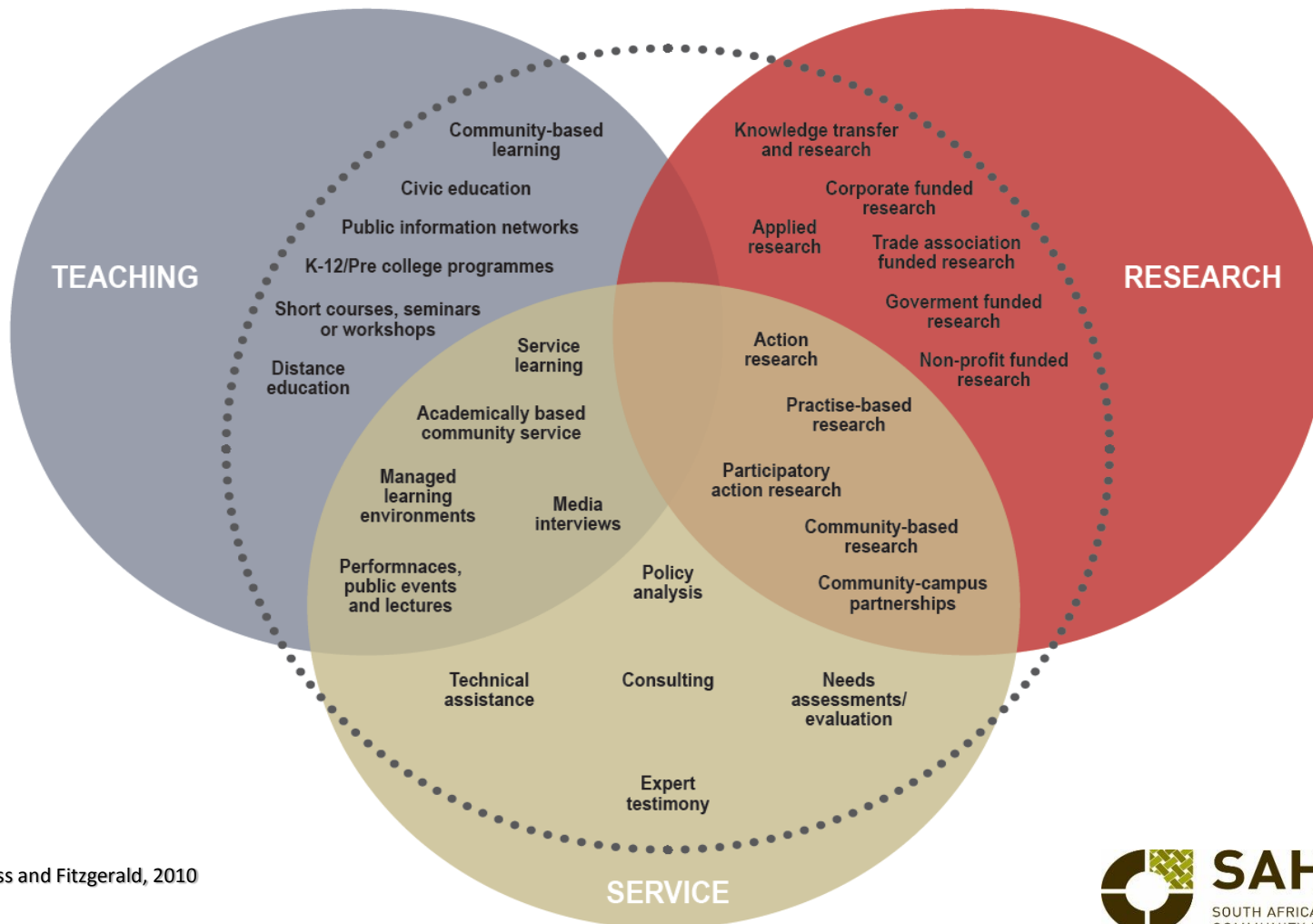
Service learning – Applied learning which is directed at specific community needs and is integrated into an academic programme and curriculum.

It could be credit-bearing and assessed, and may or may not take place in a work environment.

*Source: COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHE)
Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)
Criteria for Institutional Audits
April 2004*



Triad partnership model (Source: Lazarus, 2001)



Source: Glass and Fitzgerald, 2010



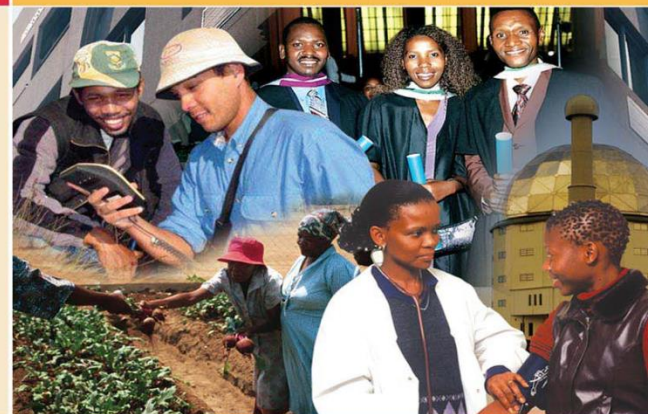
HEQC

CHE

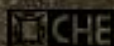
South African HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEWED

Two Decades Of Democracy

A Good Practice Guide and Self-evaluation
Instruments for Managing the Quality of
Service-Learning



2016



2006



June 2006



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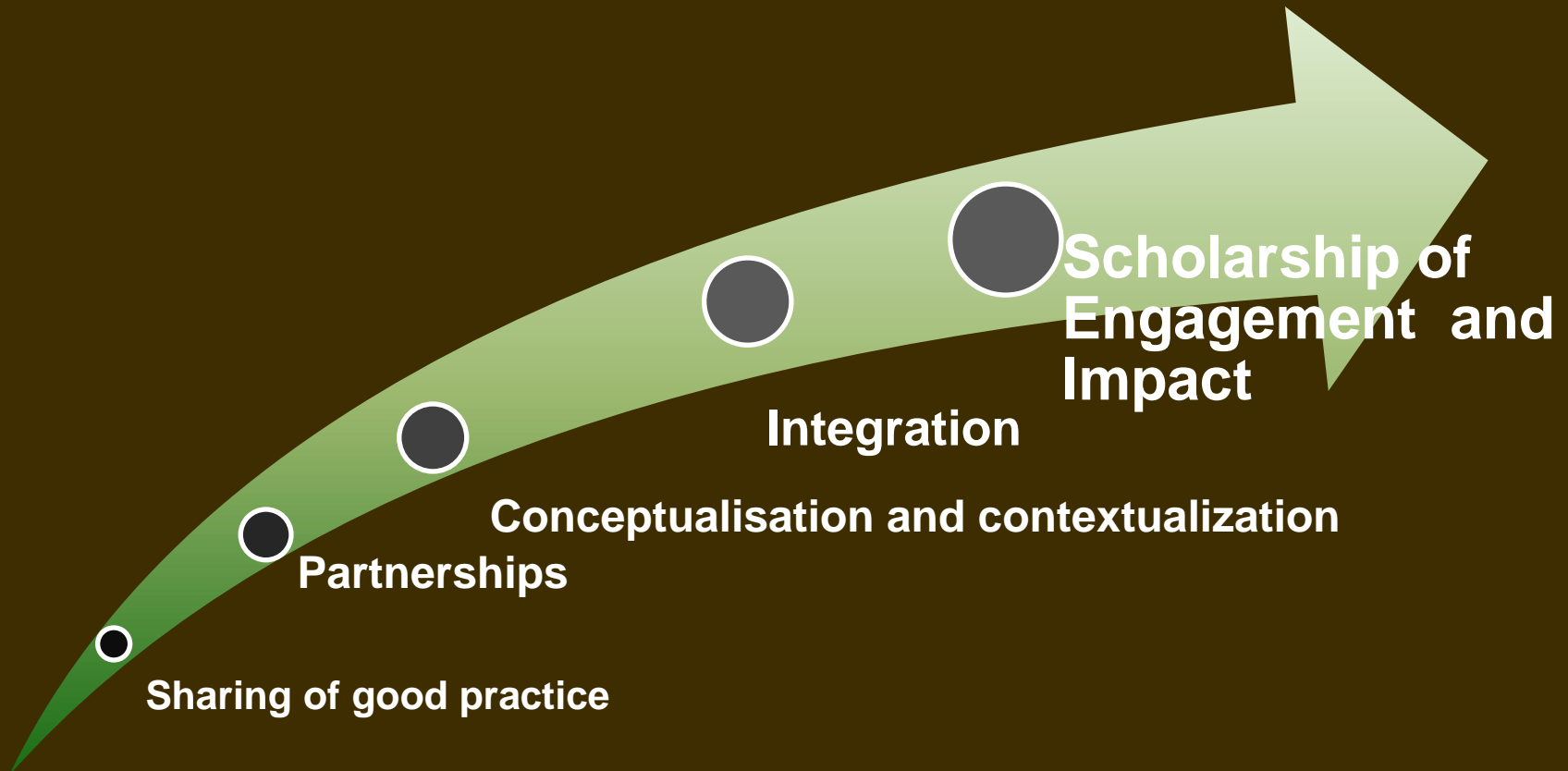


2016 Findings

Post-apartheid in higher education:

- **Integration as a system** from its fragmented past unified universities, comprehensive, traditional and universities of technology
- An **established quality assurance** and advisory body, benchmarking, reviews & audits;
- A dedicated **national department**;
- Altered **institutional landscapes**;
- **Access** and a radical change in the **demography** of students,
- More **research output** and **international recognition** through large research projects,
- Better attention paid to **teaching and learning**, to **curriculum development** and to **student support**
- University **governing frameworks**
- **Financial Aid** to many more students
-**BUT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH!!!!**

TRENDS in CE



What kind of experiences do you think are representative of the priority issues and ways of doing SL in your region/country?

- Social justice, democratic imperatives, transformation, equity, inclusive development challenges, intractable challenges
- Context and history of each university including resourcing and institutionalization of CE and SL
- Ways always linked to prescribed HEQC's quality framework- but examples include themes, geographical, demographical approaches and even a focus on previously disadvantaged students at own institution at some universities.

National and international imperatives

- National Development Plan (NDP)
- Integrated Development plans (IDP)
- Sustainable development Goals (SDG's)
- Agenda 2063 for Africa

Critical Service-Learning

An evolving teaching & learning pedagogy with a deliberate focus on:

1. Role of the university in promoting **social justice issues** – awareness; understanding need for social change
2. Empowering communities – **developing capacity and economic development**
3. Creating **change agents – partnerships**; collaborations through involvement in meaningful service.

Major challenge

- While the South African higher education system has experienced considerable growth, this growth has not been met with **sufficient funding** to enable the national goals of higher education to be fully met, and the prospects of a sustainable increase in funding are negligible. This will be complicated by the economic downturn due to COVID.
- Additionally the HEI's are not yet all addressing the **needs of society and employers and this needs CE!!**



**Thank you
Kea leboga
Merci
Dankie
Gracias
Obrigado
Ngiyabonga
Dziękuję Ci
köszönöm**



Group photo
of
conference
attendees

**Special thanks and acknowledgement to Ms. Karen Venter from
University of Free State
and SAHECEF.**