



**UNIVERSITIES
SOUTH AFRICA**

SERVICE LEARNING FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

placing students at the centre

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What we see around us.....

stagnant economy/30% unemployment

violent poverty/growing inequality

global warming and unbridled consumption

erosion of democracy/a slide towards anti-intellectualism

the degradation of ethical society

escalation of political violence/construction of 'the other'

massive global migrations

rapid changes in the world of work

public health challenges – including mental health issues

**intensely local and global
across the disciplines**



What we also see around the world:

Autonomous cars, airplanes, trains, etc.

Data warehousing and data analytics

AI, deep-learning computers, human-machine interfaces

Population genomics, gene-based medical treatments

Gene editing/genetic engineering

Social media and its impact

New food production systems

Robotics and automated (autonomous) mechanization

Culture of surveillance

Our students are involved in these



SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: ITS CHALLENGES

Addressing HE's relationship with society - rebuilding trust with publics

Addressing the national knowledge project

Building new cohorts of engaged citizens/intellectuals

Participation of graduates in the economy

Lifelong learning

Reimagining the theory—praxis nexus

Understanding and engaging the new technology moment



What are the implications for Service Learning?

2015 – 2017: *#FMF and #RMF*

The purpose of universities as social institutions.

Who owns the universities?

What are their publics? And what is their relationship with their publics?

What are the implications for service learning?
Building a new social compact.



raison d'être of the S African university?

- a. produce and disseminate knowledge of the context in which they are located
- b. directly address the sociopolitical and economic challenges
- c. embed this knowledge in the global knowledge system

This requires

engagement
partnerships



SERVICE LEARNING AS A SITE OF:

- engagement
- partnership
- engaged scholarship – T/L and R/I
- constructing dynamic theory-praxis nexuses
- co-constructing knowledge

- democratising knowledge



THE PUSH SIDE: THE UNIVERSITY MUST....Service Learning

see the city/community as a site of

- engaged research, innovation, teaching
 - knowledge production that is local (and global)
 - long-term engagement as an anchor institution
- a. New generations of engaged intellectuals
 - b. R/I and T/L to improve the quality of life in the city.



THE PULL SIDE: THE CITY MUST.....Service Learning

see the university as a socially-owned institution

- with human, technological capacity to address challenges
- as a long-term partner – an anchor institution
- to invest in for the long-term sustainability of the city

a. To build a sustainable, well-functioning urban space

b. Address service learning as a dynamic interface.

c. See universities has bridges between cities...for the passage of people, information, knowledge and technologies



Lessons from the Past

- Integrate service learning into each programme as a formal component.
- Must be co-funded out of the core budget of institutions and by the city.
- Consider the idea of sandwich qualifications
- Service learning has to be co-owned.



Build a HE system with a social justice rubric

HE system has to speak to the socioeconomic and political challenges faced by citizens in a democracy.

HE in building a more equal, more democratic society

Filling the legitimacy gap

HE in the economy

Service Learning has a major role in this





**UNIVERSITIES
SOUTH AFRICA**

THANK YOU

UNIVERSITIES AS ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

- They have a permanent physical footprint
- They share a sociocultural history with their local contexts
- Their economies are large
- They are large employers
- They deliver graduates and R&D into the local economy
- They are centres of culture, learning and innovation
- They are home to significant talent and skills

What are the implications of this for Service Learning?

