

European Platform for Community Engagement in Higher Education

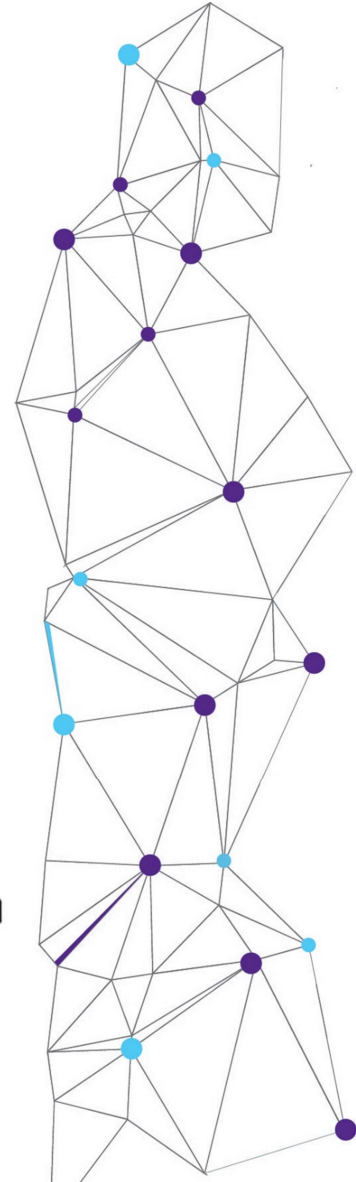
Presentation of the TEFCE Toolbox, SHEFCE Action Plans and the online platform for community engagement

PLAR-U-PAGs project, PLA-3, online
14 June 2023

Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt, Executive Director
- Institute for the Development of Education (Croatia)
- Co-Chair of the BFUG Working Group on Social Dimension

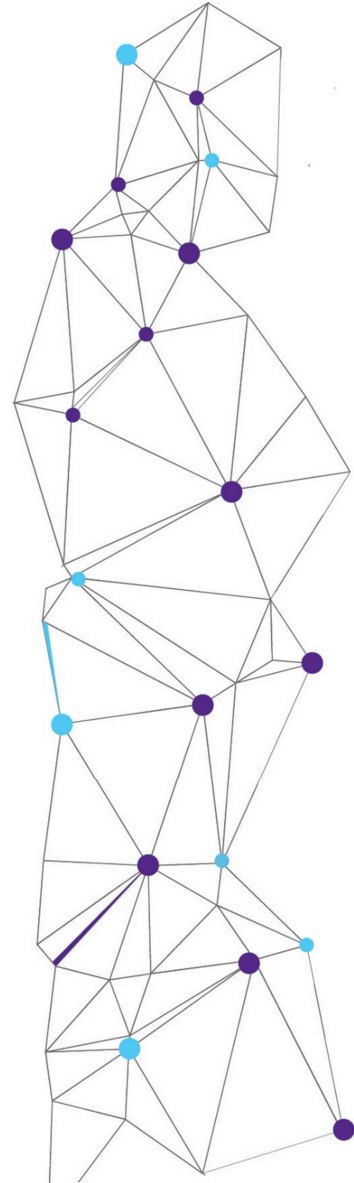


Institute for the
Development of Education

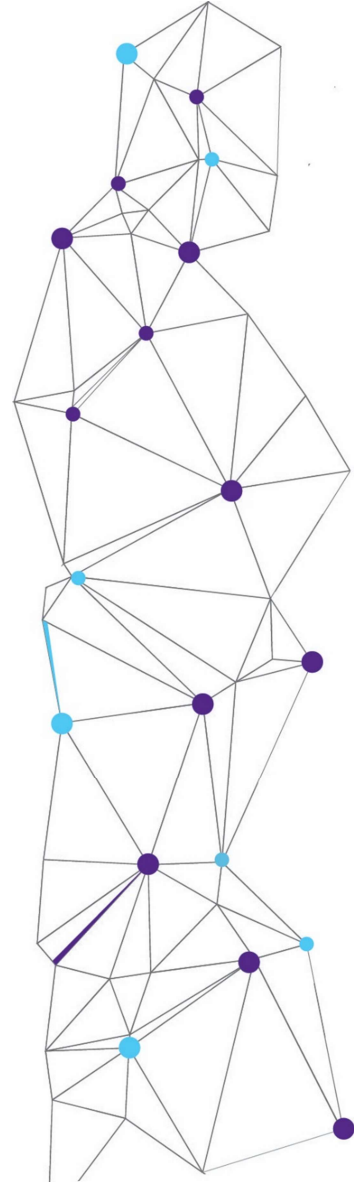


Content

1. Community engagement in higher education
2. TEFCE Toolbox and SHEFCE Action Plans
3. Conclusion



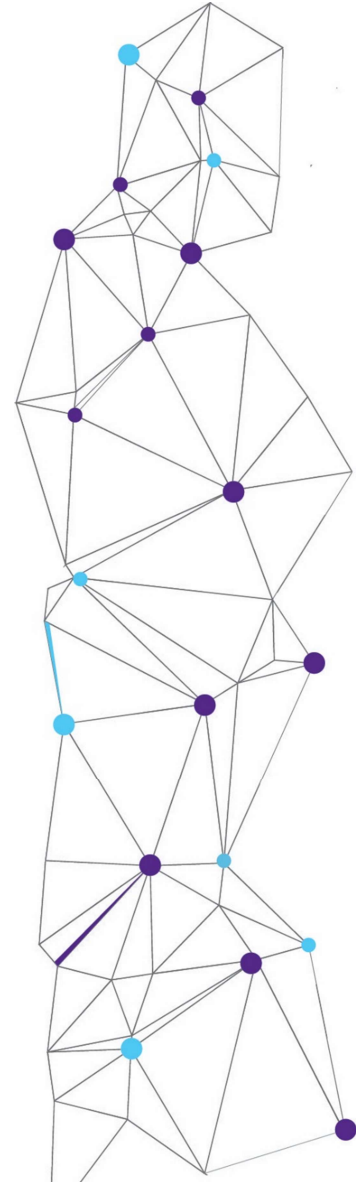
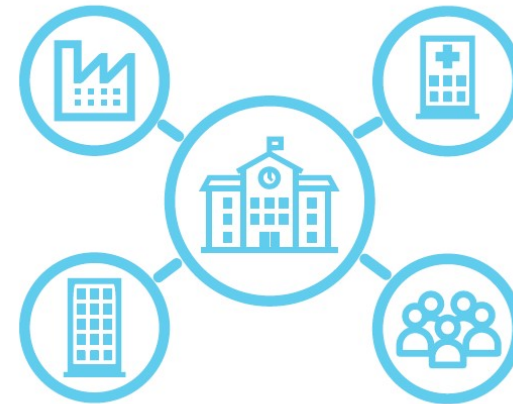
1. Community Engagement in Higher Education



DEFINING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

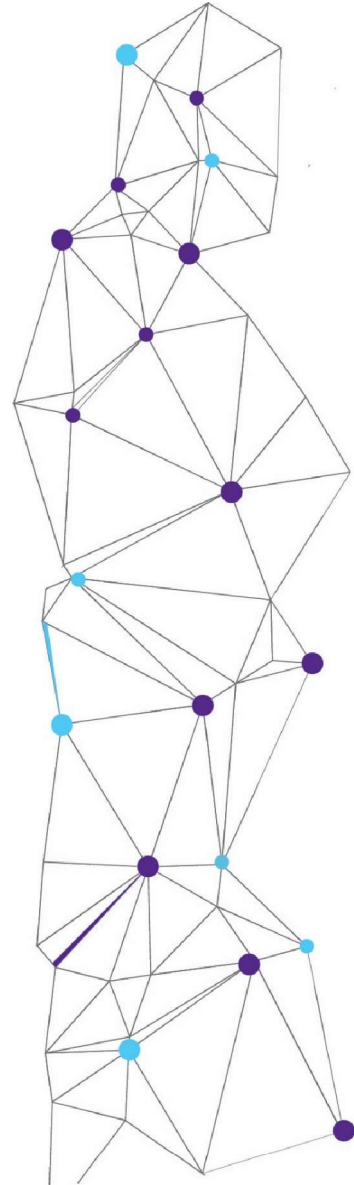
Community engagement is about how universities address societal needs in partnership with their external communities.

- Engagement: process whereby universities engage with community stakeholders to undertake joint activities that can be mutually beneficial (even if each side benefits in a different way).
- Community: refers to a broad range of external university stakeholders - NGOs, social enterprises, cultural organizations, schools, hospitals, local governments (with fewer resources) + government, businesses.
- Societal needs: political, economic, cultural, social, technological and environmental factors that can influence quality of life in society.



A WORD ABOUT TERMINOLOGY ...

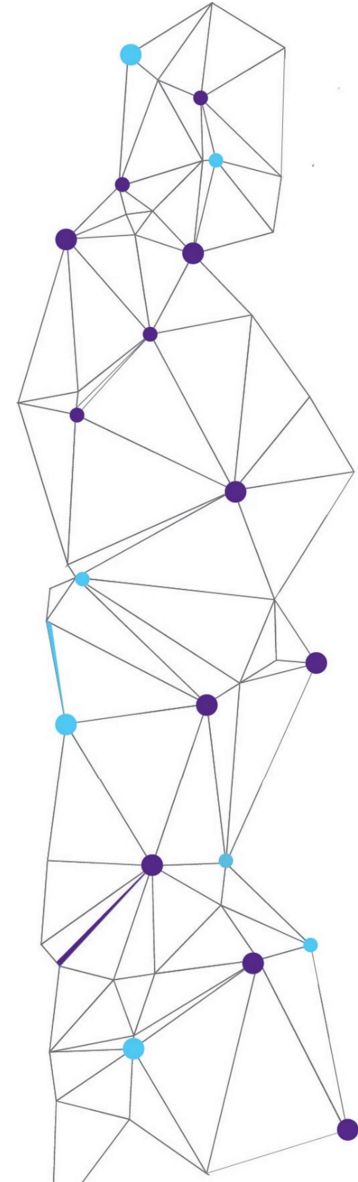
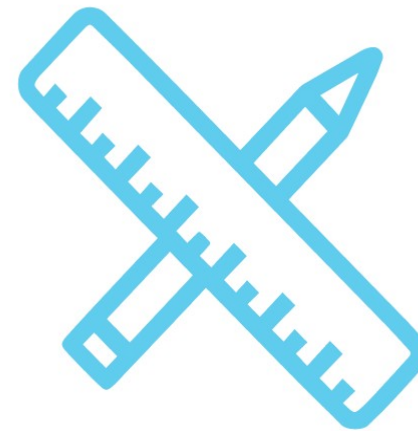
Community and civic engagement
Regional engagement
Service
Knowledge exchange
Civic mission
Local mission
Social responsibility
Engagement
Community engagement
Civic university
Public and community engagement
Outreach
Societal engagement
Public and community engagement



HOW TO DEVELOP SYSTEMMATICALLY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

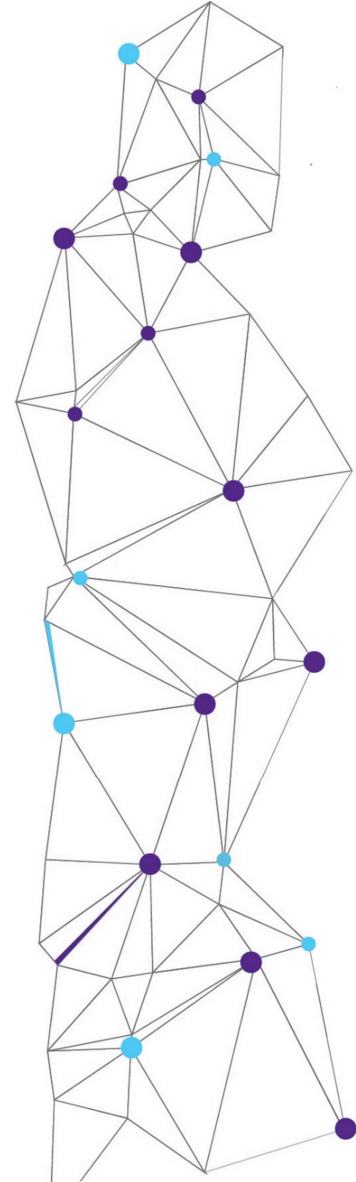
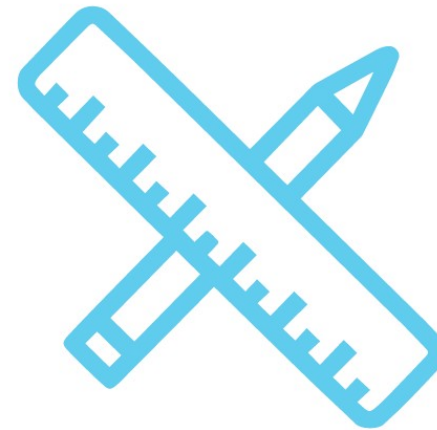
- Allow universities to **identify community engagement activities**
- Help them **understand how they perform** (by demonstrating the value and mutual benefits generated by such activities)
- Assist them in **eventual improvement**

Could a tool for measuring community engagement at HEIs help?



HOW TO MEASURE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

- There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to community engagement – it is always context-specific.
- Community engagement is notoriously difficult to measure quantitatively.



NEW EUROPEAN INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HE

Two EU-funded projects are proposing European frameworks to support community engagement in higher education



2018-2021

www.iro.hr

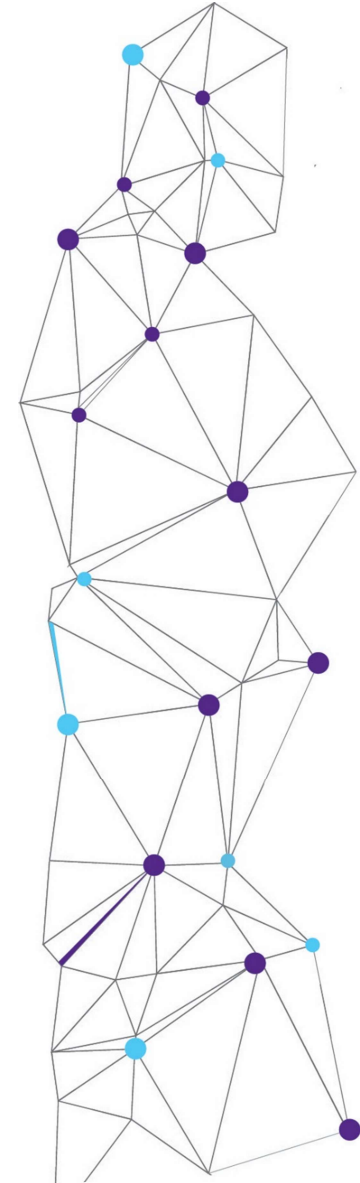


2020-2023

www.shefce.eu



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



TEFCE / SHEFCE partners



Institute for the
Development of Education



**TECHNISCHE
UNIVERSITÄT
DRESDEN**



Center for
Higher Education
Policy Studies



TU DUBLIN
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY DUBLIN



Sveučilište u Rijeci
University of Rijeka



VUB



**GHENT
UNIVERSITY**



**Universitat
de Girona**



ECIU



**OÉ Gaillimh
NUI Galway**



Donau-Universität Krems
Universität für Weiterbildung



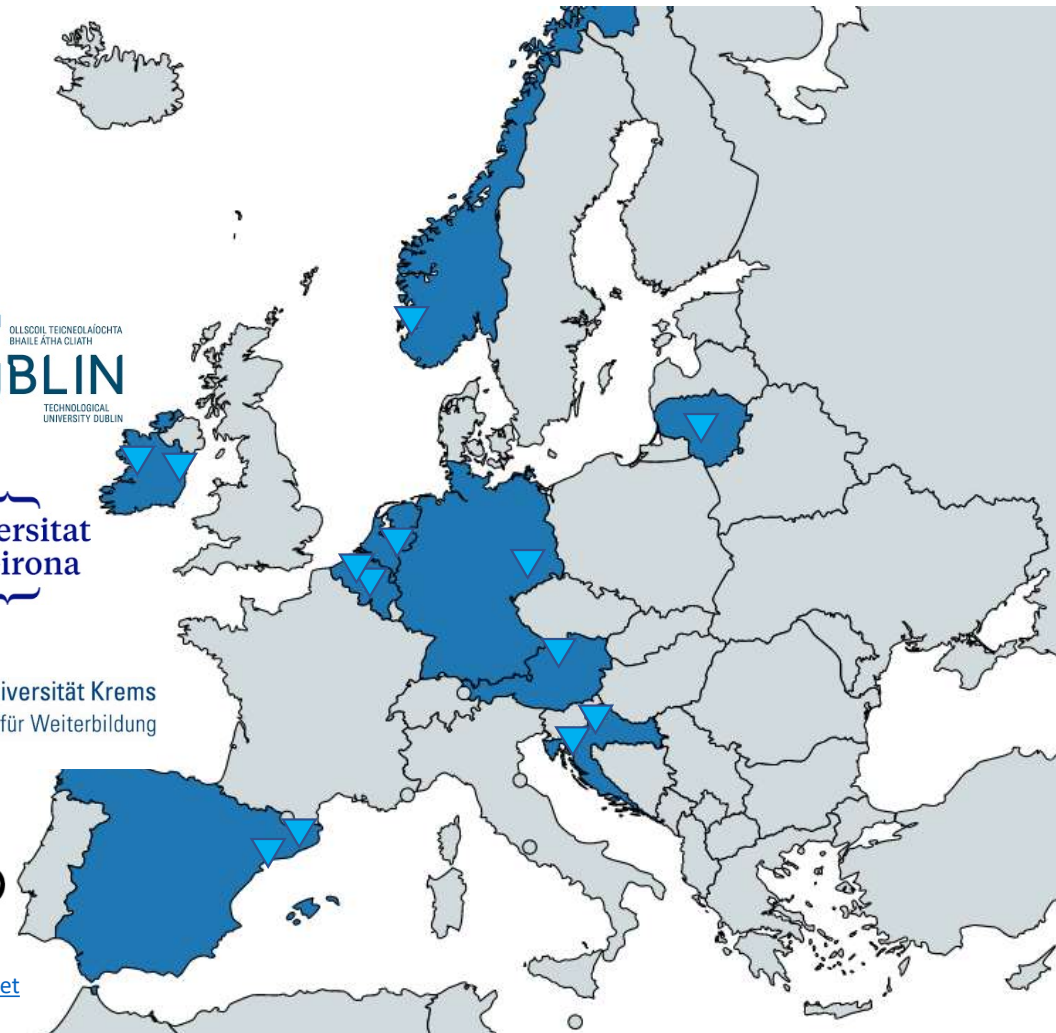
ACUP ASSOCIACIÓ
CATALANA
D'UNIVERSITATS
PÚBLIQUES



PPMi



BROADOTO
making good visible



Map source: www.mapchart.net

SHEFCE associate partners

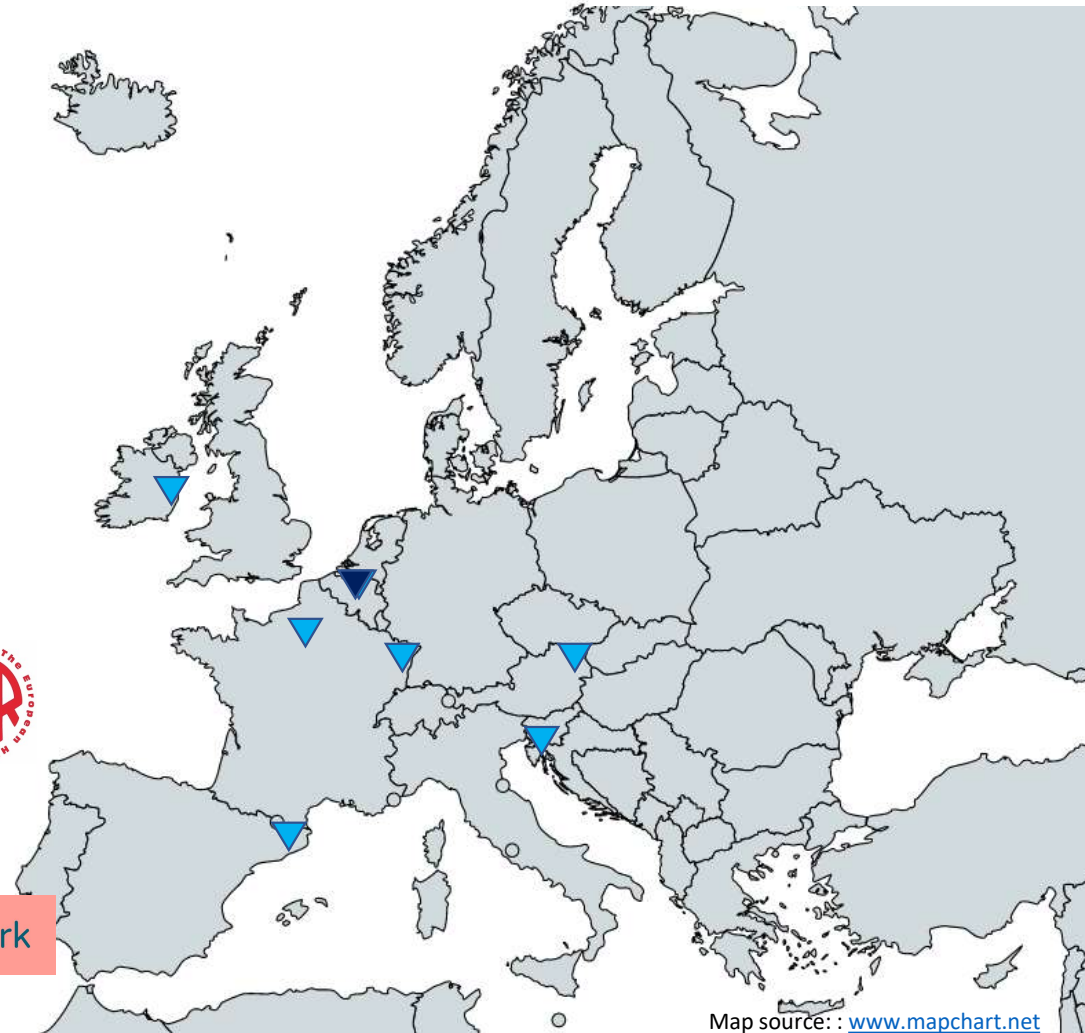
ADVISORY TEAM



NATIONAL PARTNERS & NETWORKS

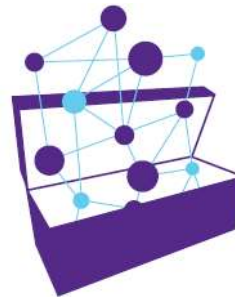


LOCAL PARTNERS



AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO 'MEASURING' ENGAGEMENT

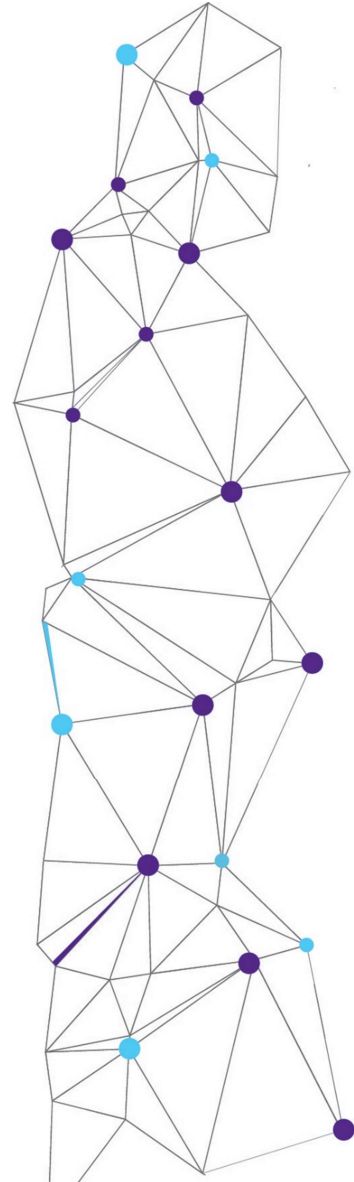
- **Qualitative:** no metrics
- **Multifaceted and context-specific:** no comparison or ranking
- **Participative:** no desk-based checklists
- **Innovative:** inspired by, but going beyond, existing tools



TEFCE
Toolbox

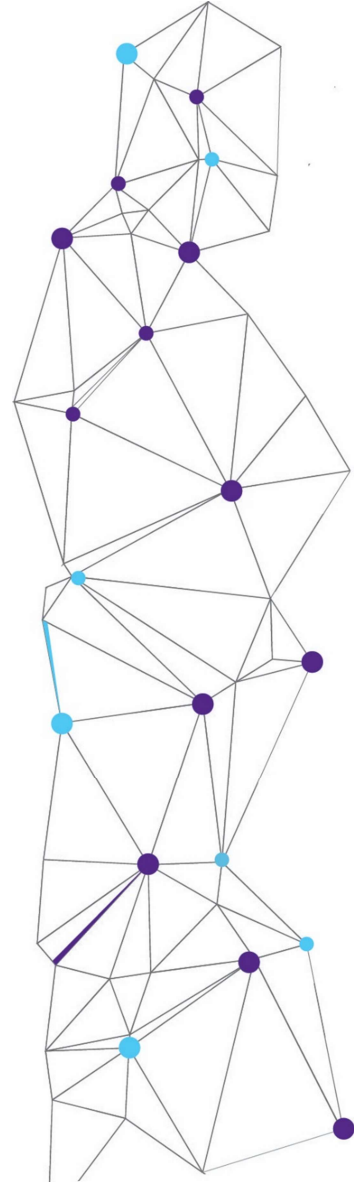
**An Institutional Self-Reflection Framework
for Community Engagement in Higher Education**

www.tefce.eu/toolbox

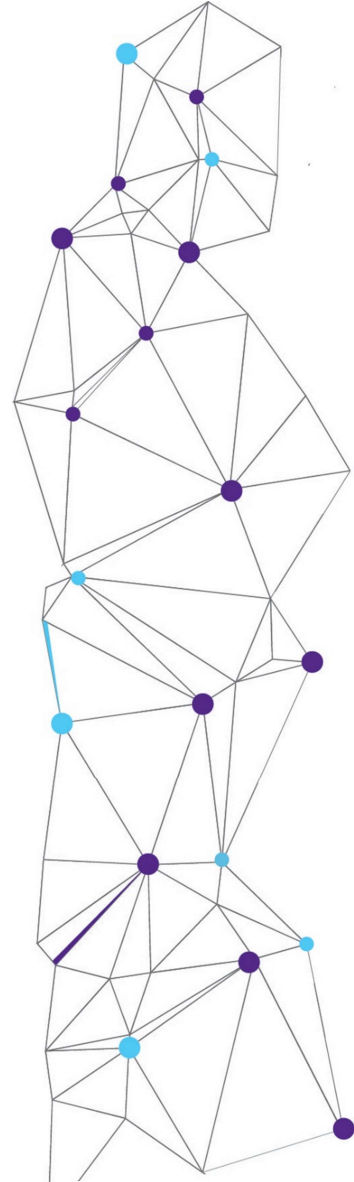


TEFCE TOOLBOX PURPOSE

- To serve as a reference tool for universities, communities and policymakers to better understand the dimensions of community engagement in higher education
- To serve as a practical tool for universities to determine how well they perform, as well as where they can improve.



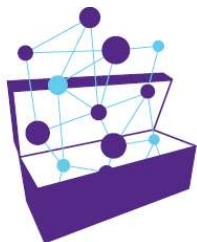
2. TEFCE Toolbox





TEFCE

Towards a European Framework for
Community Engagement in Higher Education



TEFCE Toolbox

An Institutional Self-Reflection Framework
for Community Engagement in Higher Education



TOOL 1

DIMENSIONS OF ENGAGEMENT



TOOL 2

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT



TOOL 3

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT HEATMAP



TOOL 4

SLIPDOT ANALYSIS



STAGE 1: QUICK SCAN



STAGE 2: EVIDENCE COLLECTION



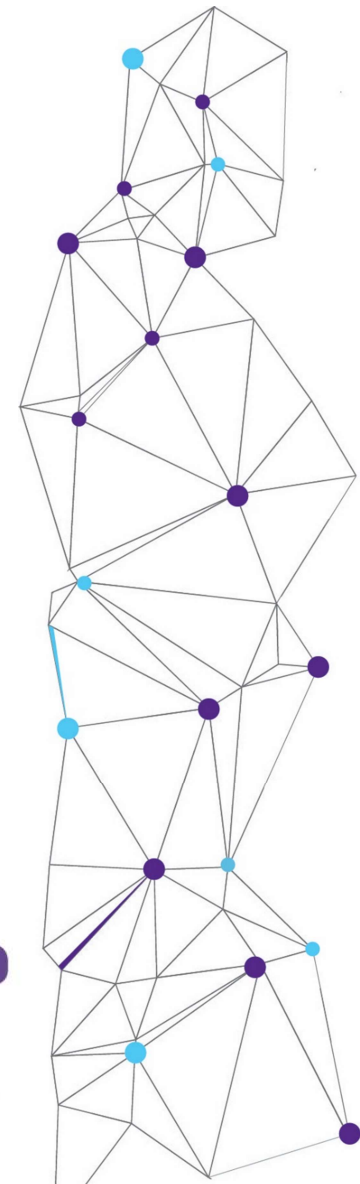
STAGE 3: MAPPING REPORT



STAGE 4: PARTICIPATIVE DIALOGUE



STAGE 5: INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

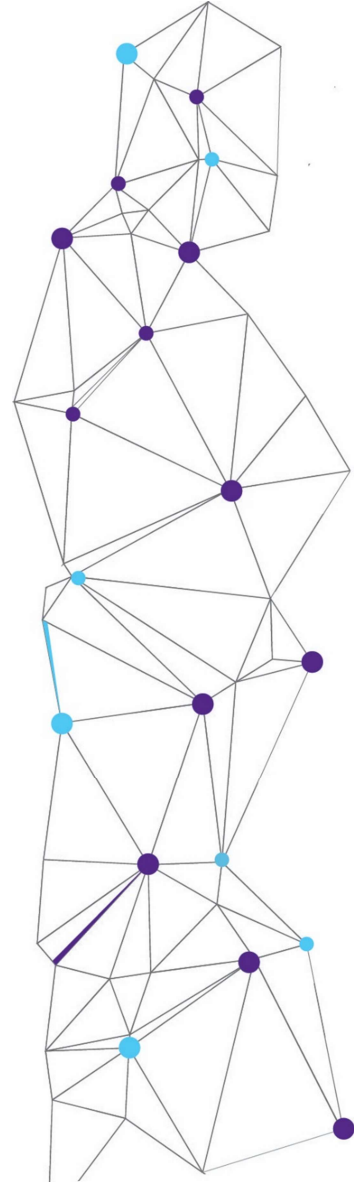
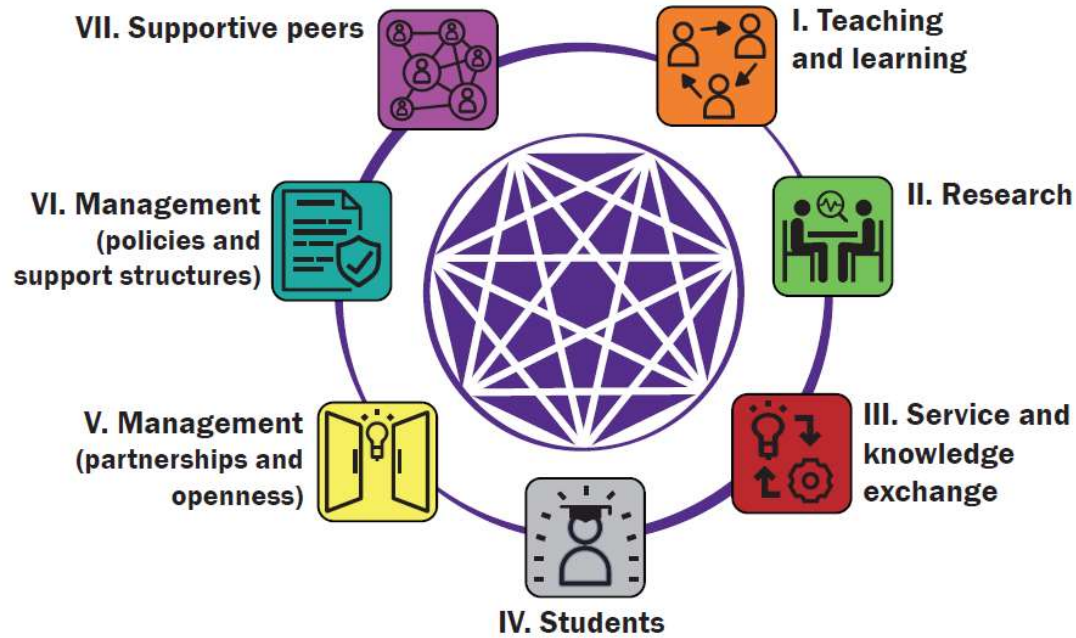


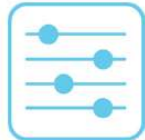


TOOL 1

DIMENSIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

Classification of community engagement activities





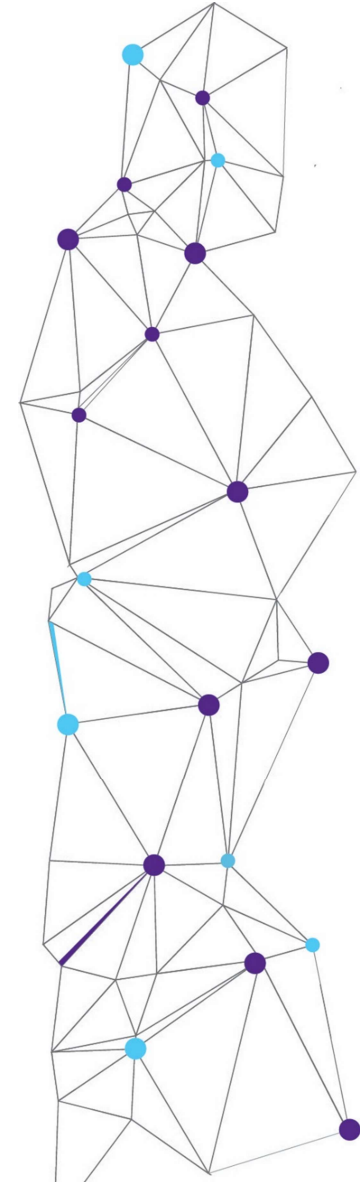
TOOL 2

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Each sub-dimension has different levels – indicating the level of authenticity of community engagement (from beginner to advanced)

**Example:*

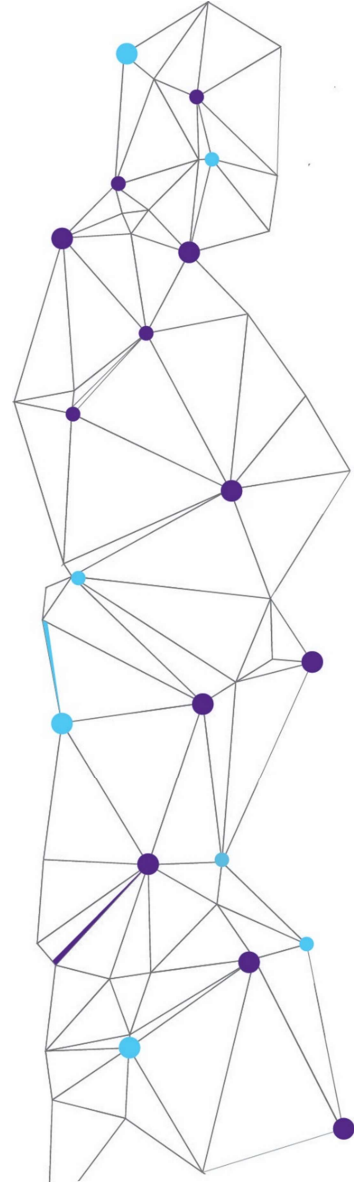
Community-based learning is included in relevant study programmes at the university and...	
Level 1	... benefits students to develop their knowledge and skills, although there is little evidence yet of their outcomes for the community.
Level 2	
Level 3	... has demonstrated benefits for students and supports community partners in addressing a short-term problem or need.
Level 4	
Level 5	... builds capacities of community partners and bring equal benefits to the students, teaching staff and university as a whole.



OPEN QUESTIONS DURING PILOTING

Two additional questions came up

- How to synthesise conclusions in a user-friendly way?
- How to foster participative discussions among stakeholders?

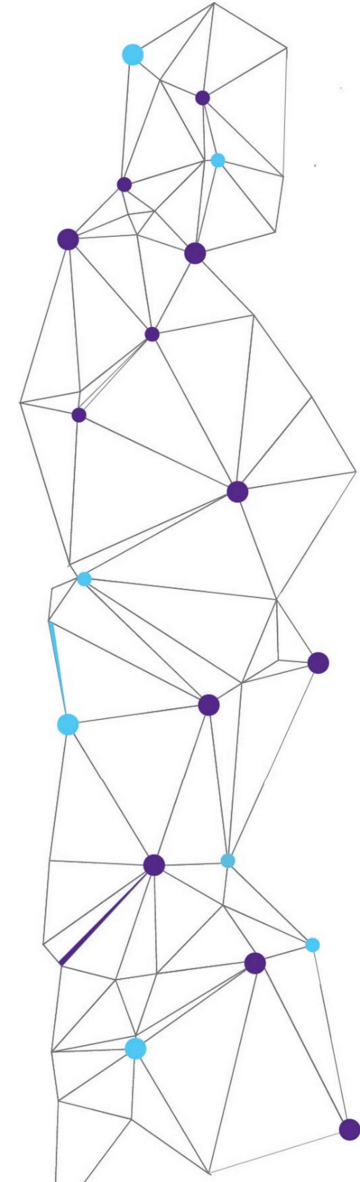
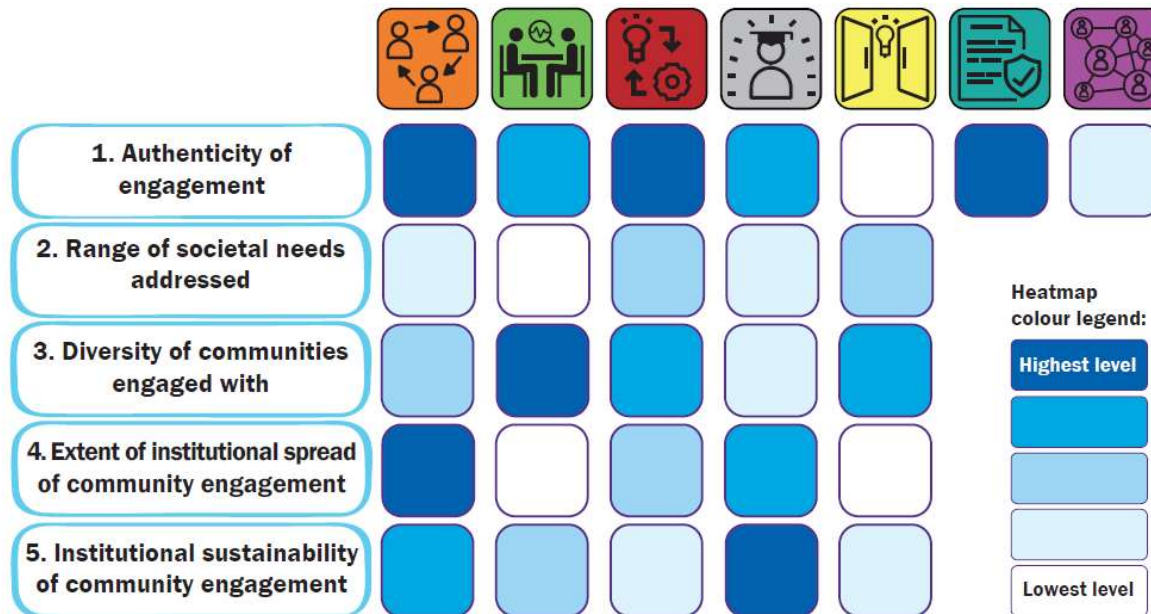


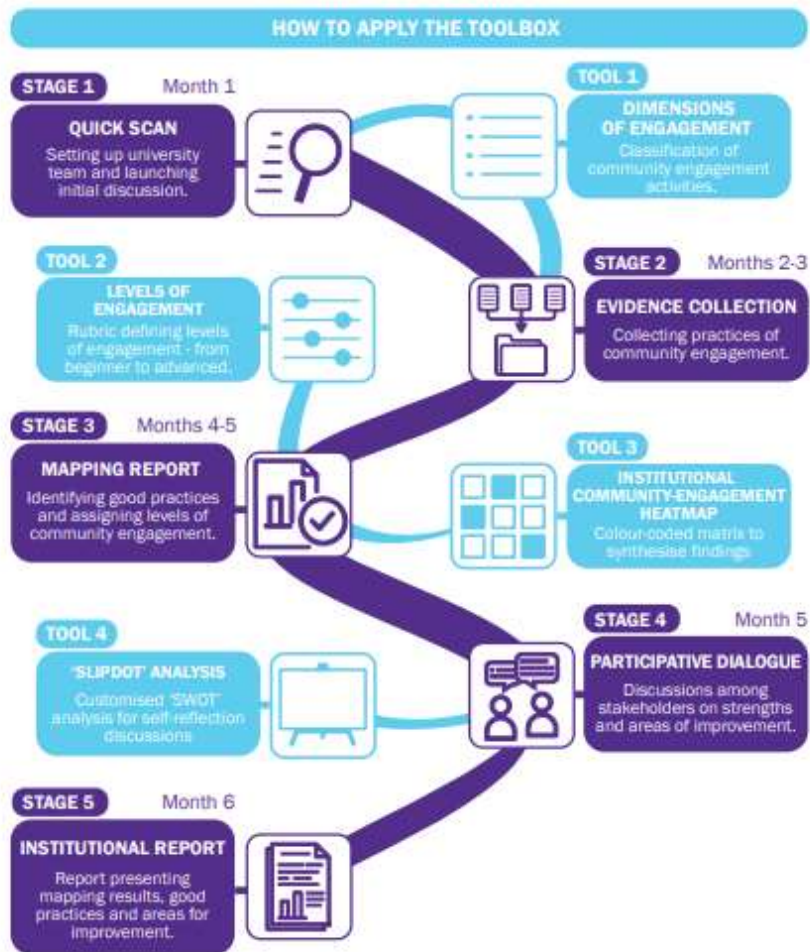


TOOL 3

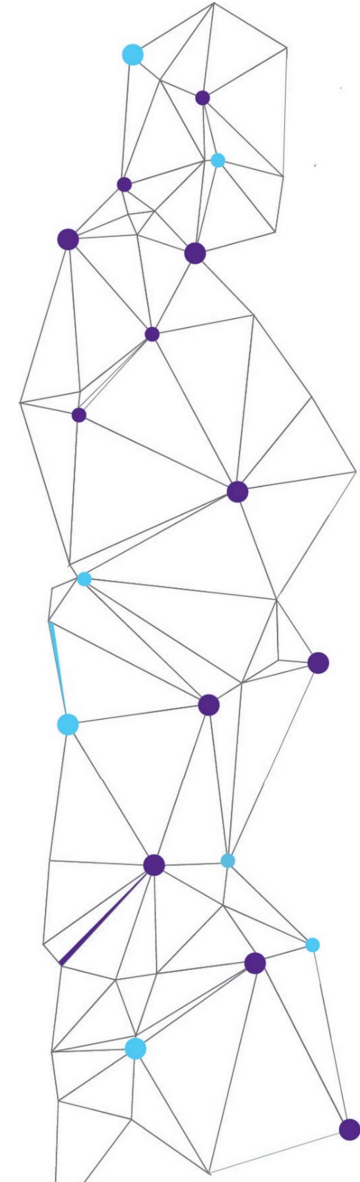
INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT HEATMAP

Synthesising results of entire process by indicating how developed is each dimension of community engagement according to 5 criteria – colour coded matrix to synthesise findings:





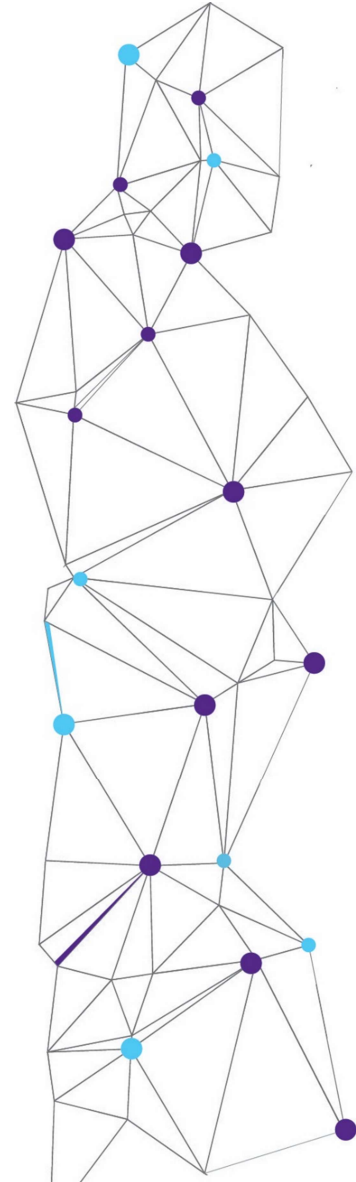
How to apply the
Toolbox:
stages 1-5



TEFCE TOOLBOX PILOTING RESULTS



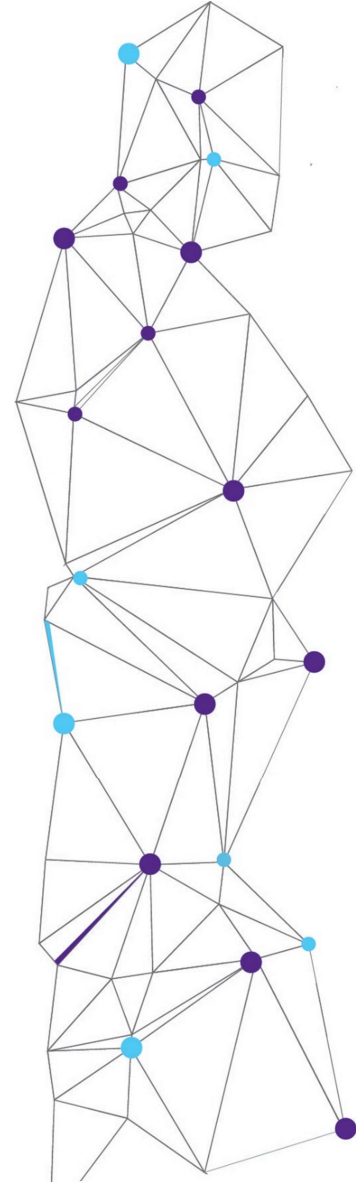
- Piloted at 8 European universities
- Involved **120 practitioners** and **60 experts**
- Results:
 - ✓ **comprehensive**
 - ✓ **context-specific**
 - ✓ **empowering** for participants
 - ✓ **uncovered** wealth of engagement activities
 - ✓ offered **insights** about potential **for improvement**
 - ✓ supported by **management**



TEFCE TOOLBOX PILOTING RESULTS



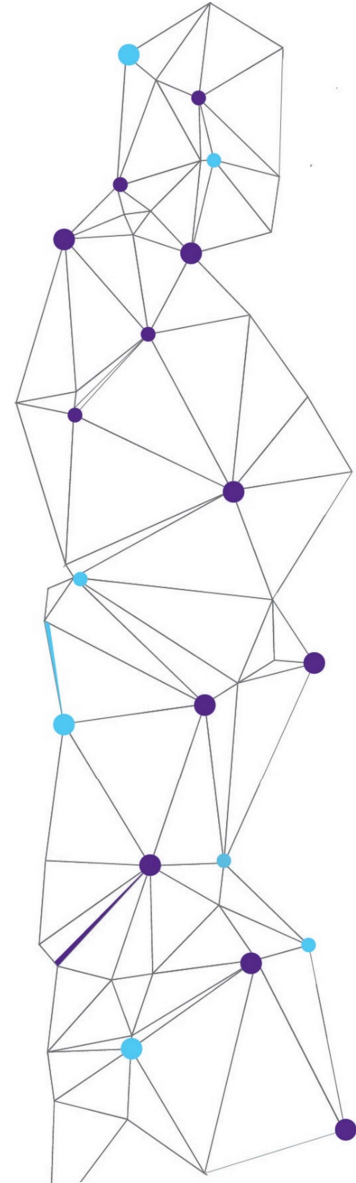
- CE activities > not recognised as a **criteria for advancement** in the academic career
- CE activities > not recognized as part of a **teaching or research workload**
- CE depends primarily on the **enthusiasm** and dedication of academic and non-academic higher education institutions' staff



TEFCE TOOLBOX PILOTING RESULTS



- There is no **national level network** to allow for the exchange of knowledge and examples of good practice in CE
- No programmes of **professional training available** to all stakeholders involved in the development of CE
- No **rewards system** at the national level for CE
- **No systematic help for the employees** of higher education institutions nor the community stakeholders for the development of CE

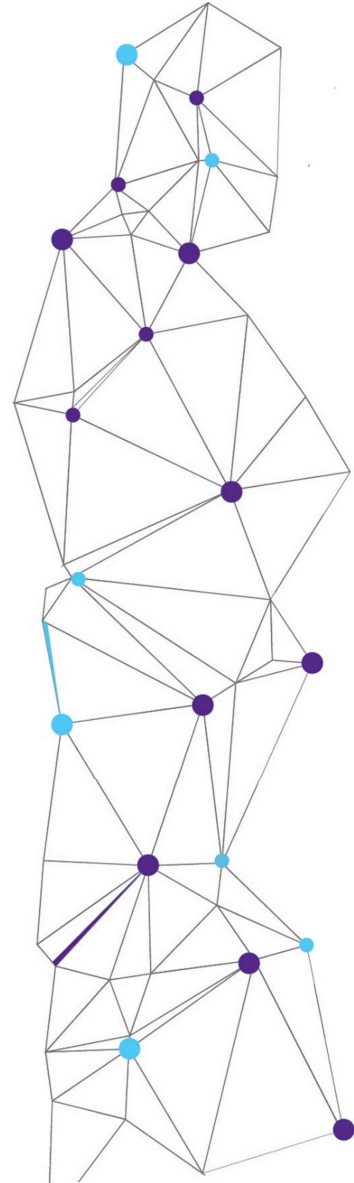


SHEFCE University Action Planning for Community Engagement

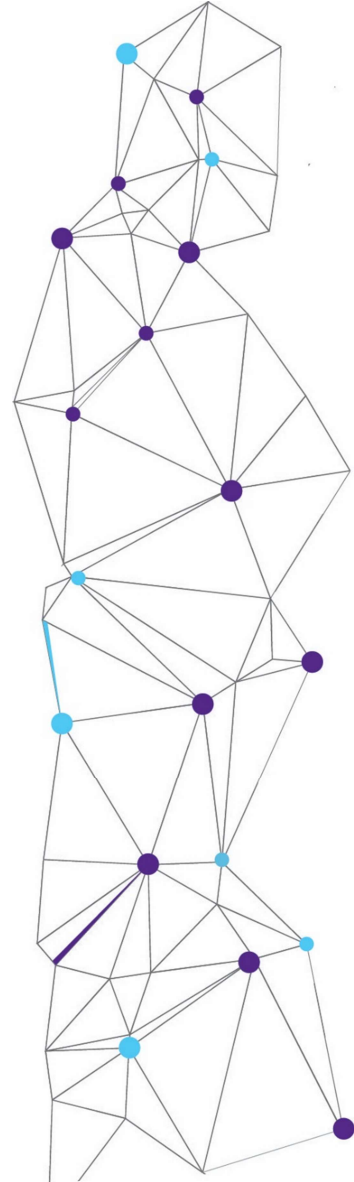
- TEFCE Toolbox used as a basis for developing university action plans
- SHEFCE project developed methodology and templates of university action plans for community engagement - stages:
 - Framing
 - Prioritizing
 - Planning
 - Dialogue
 - Evaluating

>>> piloted at 5 European universities

>>> available at <https://community-engagement.eu/toolbox/>



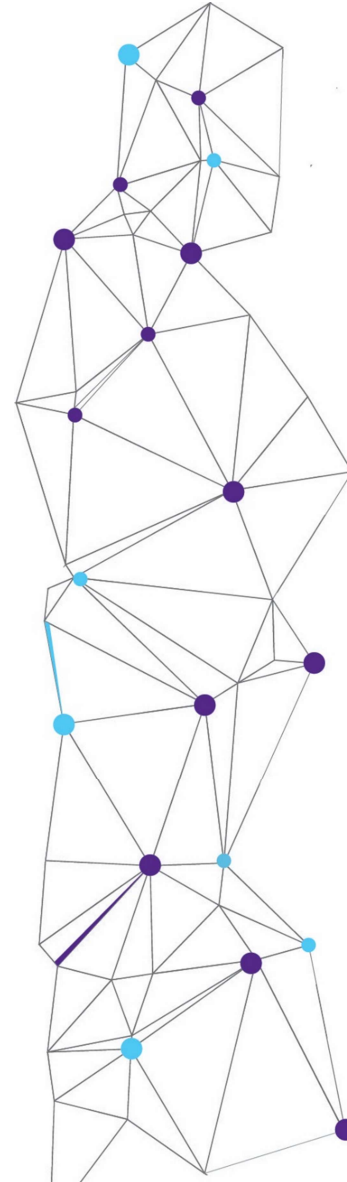
3. Conclusion



FOSTERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY USING THE TEFCE TOOLBOX AND SHEFCE ACTION PLANS



- Raises the visibility of the value the university brings to communities (& vice-versa)
- Supports intrinsic motivation of community-engaged staff, students and partners.
- Supports peer-learning between institutions
- Provides a basis for action-planning

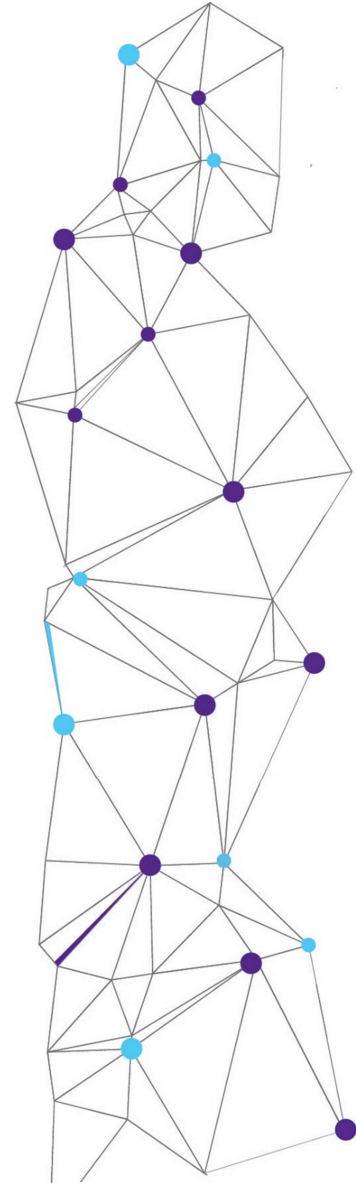


HOW CAN POLICY BEST SUPPORT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HE?

1. Funding agreements
2. External quality assurance with accreditation
3. External quality assurance without accreditation
4. Ranking
5. Awards
6. Quality labels
7. Benchmarking
8. Institutional reviews
9. Self-assessment

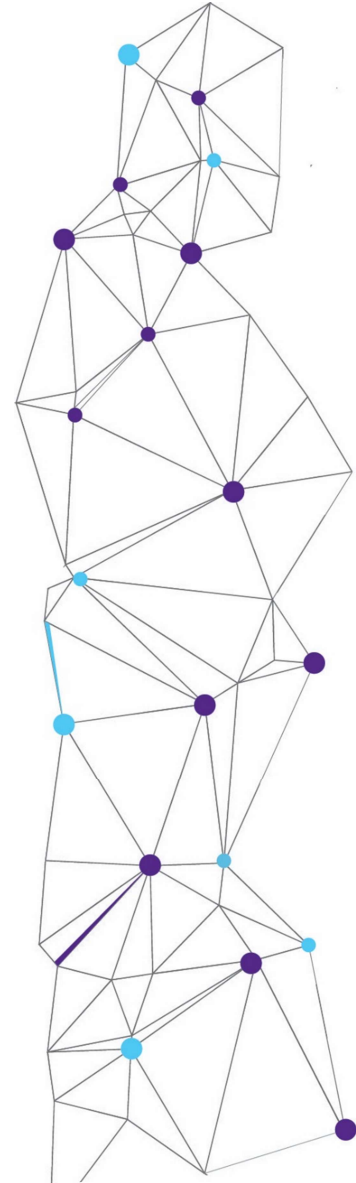
TEFCE's proposed approach

focus on **building capacities of higher education institutions for engagement** and on facilitating a learning journey, rather than on compliance or competition



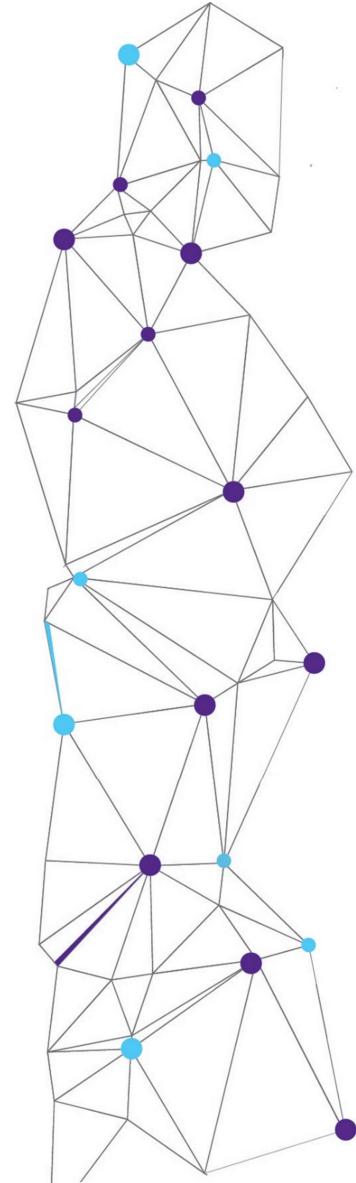
TOP-DOWN APPROACH: TEFCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **1.** Allow to recognize community engagement as one of the **criteria for promotion and career progression** and as a part of the **designated workload** of either teaching or research.
- **2. Learning tools:** organize programmes for building capacity (e.g. targeted professional training on CE, expert advice) and peer learning (among practitioners).
- **3.** Initiate a national or European **award for deserving individuals** at higher education institutions and among community stakeholders for CE.
- **4. Incentives and funding** - scale up through incentives (e.g. incorporating community engagement into existing EU funding programmes).



BOTTOM-UP APPROACH: TEFCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **1. Build a network/alliance** of European higher education institutions committed to community engagement
- **2. Connect with existing European-level institutional networks** and ensure discussions on community engagement within European level organisations such as the EUA, EURASHE, ESU and ENQA/EQAR
- **3. Build other alliances and scale up:** At the European level, connect the community engagement agenda to the European Universities initiative



Community engagement in higher education

Community engagement in higher education is how universities address societal needs in partnership with their external communities.

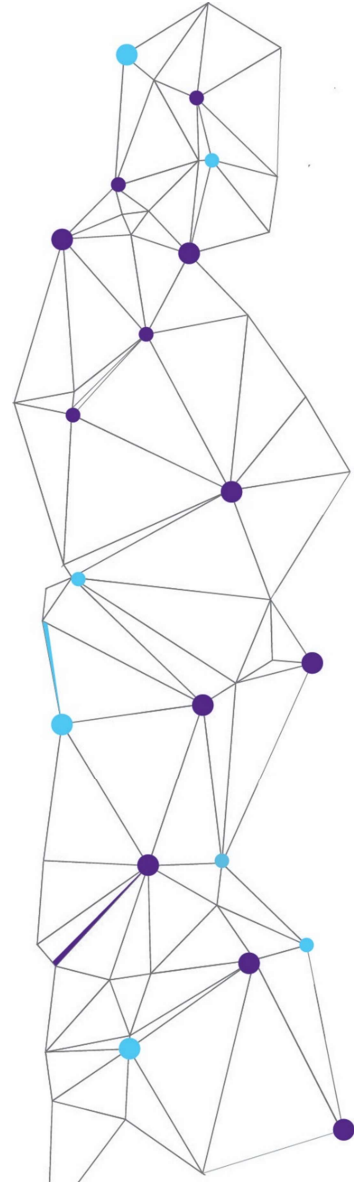
This platform provides universities with resources on how to improve their community engagement across all seven thematic dimensions of engagement: teaching and learning, research, service and knowledge exchange, students, management (partnerships and openness), management (policies and structures), and supportive peers.

[Get Started](#)



- European online platform for community engagement in HE

- ✓ Engaged universities
- ✓ Engaged practices
- ✓ TEFCE Toolbox
- ✓ SHEFCE Action Plans
- ✓ Knowledge Hub
- ✓ Join the European Network of experts in community engagement



Join our dissemination event on community engagement in Brussels in June 2023!

What?

European Tools to Support Community Engagement in Higher Education: from Self-reflection to Action

When?

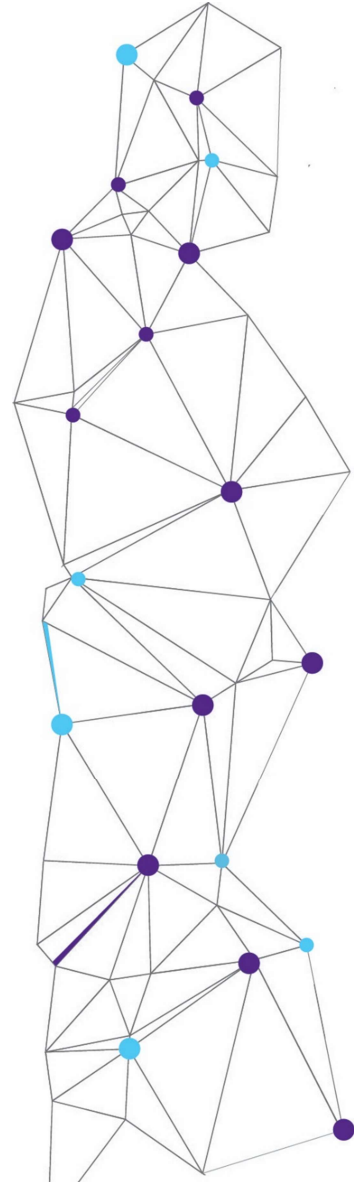
Tuesday, 20th June 2023 from 10-13h

Where?

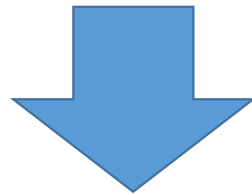
Free University Brussels (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

More info?

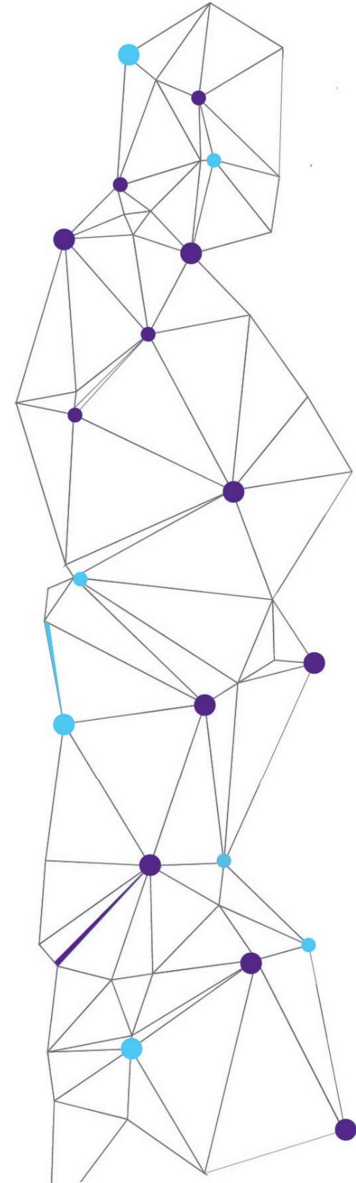
<https://community-engagement.eu/news/>



CREATING A EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



TOP-DOWN approach + BOTTOM-UP approach = building a
European PLATFORM for community engagement



Thank you for your attention!

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