

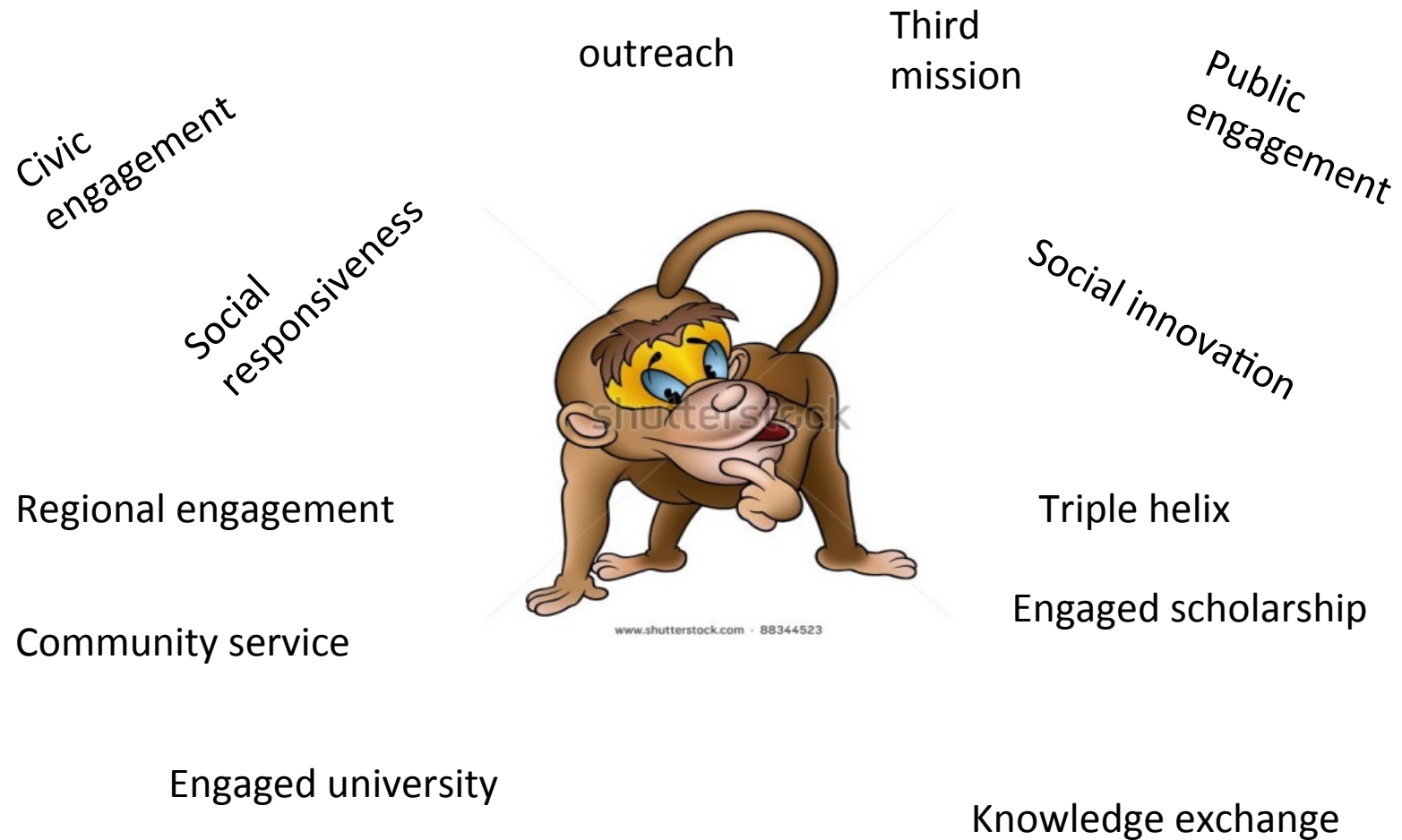
Institutional research

Focus on Community Engagement

Contextualising

- **With some differences there is homogeneity with respect to indicators used internationally**
- **Main focus on inputs, processes and outputs with respect to teaching and learning and research**
- **IR practitioners strategically positioned in institutions**
- **Big contrast with field of research on CE**

What is CE?



Current situation

- **In many institutions practitioners are located in units with no direct connection to the Vice Chancellor, or to the leaders of the research and teaching and learning components of the university.**
- **Often operating on the margins of mainstream university activities,**
- **Research in disparate disciplinary journals**
- **Conceptual differences**
- **Ignorance about the scale and nature of CE across institutions**
- **Lack systemic data**

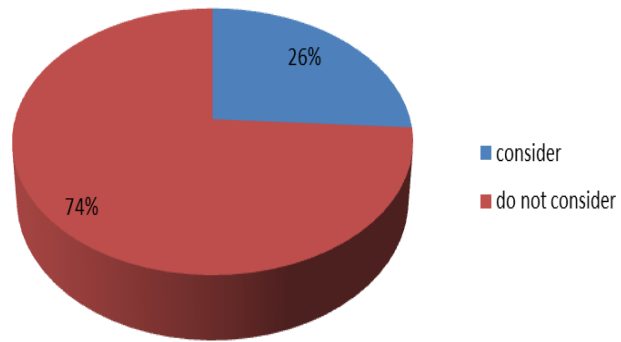
State of research on field

- **National research projects have focused on dimensions of CE - not on developing an information base for compiling a national picture**
- **JET study on community service (1997)**
- **CHESP study on service learning in 12 universities**
- **Study of HEQC audits**
- **NRF funding (30 million to end 2015)**
- **HSRC study of 5 universities (2159 academics 62% valid responses)**
- **2014 survey of institutionalisation**

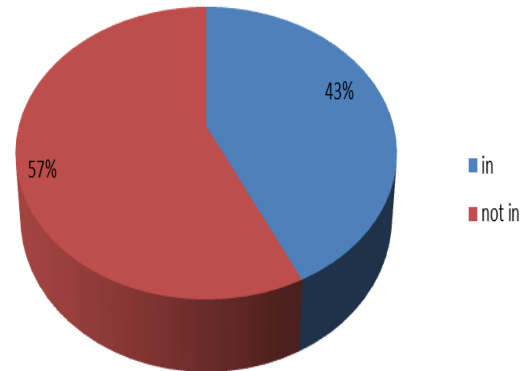
Institutionalisation survey in 2014

- **Structure of the questionnaire was influenced by the framework developed by Beere and colleagues for institutionalising public engagement (Beere et al, 2011).**
- **Responses revealed significant differences with regard to integrating CE into mainstream systems (Favish et al).**

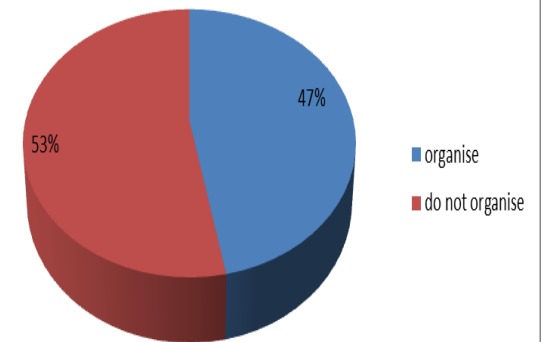
Selection criteria



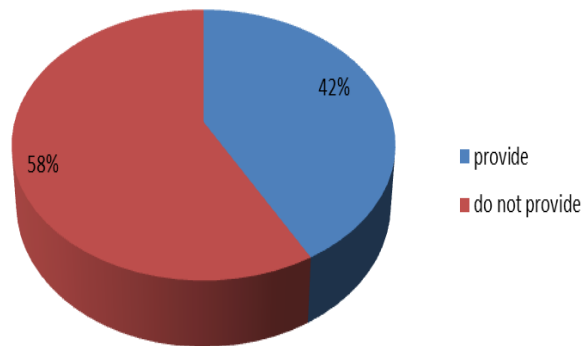
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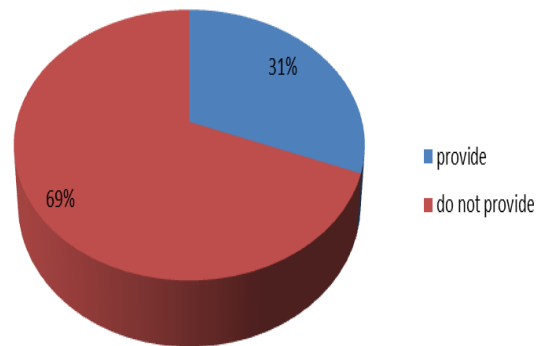
Symposiums



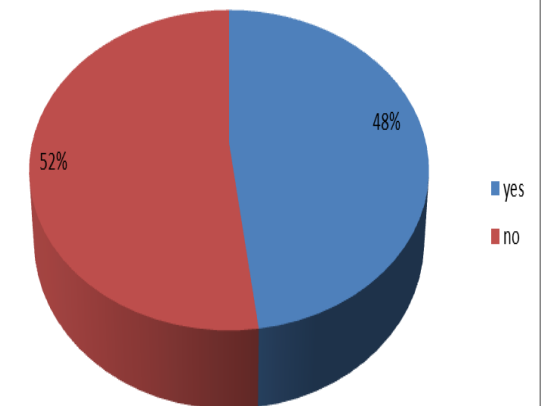
Awards for staff



Staff development



CE Unit



5 more institutionalised

2015 study

- **Aim: to determine whether universities in South Africa are conducting research on CE in their institutions, and are using this information to inform policy and plans at their institutions.**
- **12 out of 23 responses - 52% response rate. (3 universities of technology, 3 comprehensive universities, and 6 traditional universities, including 2 rurally-based universities).**

Framework

- Community engagement involves universities and multiple social partners, but excludes interaction with other academic constituencies;
- The interactions between universities and social partners should be characterised by reciprocity and mutual benefit;
- Community engagement is a key mechanism for building civic consciousness amongst students and plays a role in building their commitment and capacity for critical citizenship;
- The activities should have an intentional public purpose or benefit and form part of the broader notion of the social responsiveness of universities; and
- Engagement can take multiple forms.



Report of study

- Frequency
- Format
- Decision-making
- Submission of reports
- Methodology
- Foci
- Purposes, relationships & outputs
- Impact
- Uses of information



Reports

- 10 of 12 compile separate reports
- One: CE embedded in other reports
- Nine provide reports to Senate & seven to Council
- 4 Senate Committees determine format
- Senior Exec members determine format in 5 others

Info systems

- Four use web-based systems
- Two have comprehensive info systems
- Four mainly cover profiles or case studies
- Ask Deans to provide info

Foci

- Research & teaching forms (10)
- Strategic themes (9)
- Students (8) & support staff (4)
- Integration with core functions (1)
- Agreements (7)
- All or most academics (8), academics who work with CE unit (10)

Impact

- 7 capture data on impact of initiatives on university and external partner (s)

Use

- 8 reported that the data collected and the reports had helped to inform the development of policies, strategies or institutional plans

Institutionalisation

- Perhaps 7 - 9 have institutionalised CE to greater extent than others

UCT case study

- **2005 – 2010: Portraits of practice used to inform policy, then shifted to examples of good practice, issues for debate and accountability (themes determined by USRC).**
- **In 2011 focus on strategic initiatives**
- **2013: teaching forms**
- **2014: Comprehensive reporting plus**

Challenges

- **Status of CE**
- **Motivation to provide data**
- **Lack of awareness of range of outputs**
- **Debates about how to measure quality and impact**
- **Insufficient integration in the performance review systems**

Conclusion

- **A lot happening and shifts towards institutionalisation**
- **High degree of commonality in the categories within which information is collected – may be able to reach consensus nationally?**
- **Challenges should not be under-estimated.**
- **Potential danger of trying to introduce too much uniformity**
- **Cannot also rely exclusively on quantitative indicators.**