

# Centre for Research on Higher Education and Development (CRHED)



## CRHED - *Creating capabilities and advancing social justice*

The Centre for Research on Higher Education and Development (CRHED) is an international research group concerned with advancing social justice and removing inequalities in and through education, with a particular focus on higher education. We research well-being and agency formation, understood as creating and sustaining worthwhile human capabilities and contributions to reducing poverty in society.

Our work is concerned with what would be needed to transform universities (as well as education more broadly) to advance the richness of people's human capabilities. The main focus of CRHED's research programme is to interrogate the role of higher education in advancing human development, including, but not limited to, economic opportunities and economic development. We address questions about what kind of society we should be striving for; what is important in a democratic society; and thus, what kind of higher education is valuable, relevant and desirable. Questions and strategies that focus only on economic growth cannot be sustainably addressed in the absence of these substantive human development focused questions.

Our research, firmly located within a social justice agenda, spans the domains of policy formation, curriculum and pedagogy, gender equity, professional education, employability and inclusive development, and access, participation, voice and diversity

## Who we are

### Director



CRHED was founded and is directed by **Prof Melanie Walker**, a Senior Research Professor at the University of the Free State (UFS) and NRF Research Chair in Higher Education and Human Development. She is Vice-President elect of the Human Development and Capability Association (2014-2017) and a fellow of the Academy of Science for South Africa (ASSAF). Prof Walker has delivered numerous international keynotes and seminars, written more than 120 book chapters and refereed journal articles, and authored or edited 13 books, including two highly regarded volumes on doctoral education. Her most recent books have focused on higher education and human development, as well as educating 'public-good professionals'.

### Staff members

Dr Samuel Fongwa – Research Fellow

Ms Tarisai Gwena – Assistant Office Manager

Ms Lucretia Smith – Office Manager

Dr Merridy Wilson-Strydom – Senior Research Fellow

### Post-doctoral fellows and post-graduate students

CRHED currently has four post-doctoral fellows of diverse nationality (Finland, India, South Africa and Vietnam), 10 PhD students and 2 Masters students (Kenya, Lesotho, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe)

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## Overarching research programme

Two '**BIG TICKET**' questions guide our research programme.

1. How do we build a decent society, with human capabilities secured for all?
2. How should and how does higher education contribute?

Three **central themes** underpin all our research projects, including postgraduate work:

1. Opportunities and functioning achievements of individuals and of groups, in comparison with one another.
2. Critical policy analysis.
3. Key challenges to advancing human development and social justice.

### Overarching research objectives:

1. To generate a research-based understanding of higher education and its contributions to the human capabilities of diverse individuals, to human capital, and to the social good.
2. To increase our understanding of transformative practices and policies, of inclusive processes across teaching, research and community, and of equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students.
3. To engage policy makers, professionals and higher education practitioners in the development implications of the research programme.

## Current research projects

CRHED is currently involved in the following research projects (see CRHED website for further details).

- Gender, empowerment and agency in higher education (2012-2015)
- Universities, employability, and inclusive development (2013-2015)
- Academic identity formation in an age of austerity for the Arts and Social Sciences (2011-2015)
- Teachers and teacher education(2014-2015)
- Student identity formation, a participatory research project (2014)
- Scholarship into pedagogical practice (2013-2014)
- Identifying enablers and constraints on undergraduate students' capabilities for success (2014-2016)
- Pedagogical relationships: Implications for teaching and learning of lecturer's experiences and understandings of their students (2014)
- Social Work students project – Facilitating the transition to university (2014)



## Events

CRHED hosts a monthly seminar series: '*International Research Seminar on Higher Education and Development*' as well as various colloquia involving national and international speakers.

Updated information is available from our website.

## Research Collaborations

CRHED currently has research links with scholars at the following institutions

- IUSS, University of Pavia, Italy
- Institute of Education, London
- School of Education, University of Nottingham
- Department of Development Studies, Technical University of Valencia, Spain
- College of Education, Victoria University, Australia
- Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia
- Faculty of Education, University of Cyprus
- Department of Sociology, University of Southern Maine, USA
- Directorate of Teaching and Learning, University of the Western Cape
- Research School for Education and Capabilities, Bielefeld University, Germany

## Contact details

For more information about CRHED, our projects, as well as PhD and Post-Doctoral Fellowships available, please contact Prof Melanie Walker at [walkermj@ufs.ac.za](mailto:walkermj@ufs.ac.za).

Website: <http://checar.ufs.ac.za>