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## Summary

### Purpose, scope and secondary objective

This evaluation set out to gauge the impact the University of the Free State's (UFS) community-engaged scholarship portfolio as a whole has from a community well-being (CWB) perspective based on predefined engagement categories (i.e. engaged teaching and learning, engaged research, and engaged citizenship) and to determine who the major contributors to that portfolio are.

A secondary objective (as covered in the discussion section of this report) was to interpret the UFS's findings against / in relation to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNs SDGs) as well as the goals set out in the South African Government's National Development Plan (SA's NDP) and the African Union's agenda for 2063.

### Evaluation methodology

As proposed by Coetzee (2020b), a theoretical-methodological approach was followed. Accordingly, an explanatory mixed-methods evaluation design (Huber & Froehlich, 2020) was used to develop a community engagement (CE) profile for the UFS as institution (based on the number of engaged-activity outputs); a theory of change and log-frame model to guide the evaluation and to show attribution (see table 1); and 14 domain-specific indicators of CWB (Sirgy et al., 2010) to measure the impacts that stemmed from the UFS's engaged activities.

### Evaluation results

- The UFS's engaged activities (i.e. its inputs) generated 285 engaged-activity outputs.
- The majority of these engaged activities comprised of engaged citizenship (44%), followed by engaged research (33%), and then engaged teaching and learning (23%).
- UFS students contributed most to the university's CE profile, followed by its faculties of Humanities, Health, Economic and Management Sciences, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Education, Theology and Law, while the Office of the Dean's contribution took the form of a service learning opportunity.
- The UFS's outputs resulted in 425 impacts, most of which were produced by its students, followed by its faculties of Health, Humanities, Economic and Management Sciences, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Education, Theology and Law.

- The UFS made the biggest impact in the educational WB of communities, followed by their spiritual/religious WB, health WB, financial WB, leisure WB, neighbourhood WB, political WB, social WB, work WB and environmental WB.
- These results were further explored during the qualitative phase of the study, which confirmed that the UFS's engaged activities contributed directly to the empowerment and upliftment of its community partners and provided a number of direct health-related and other benefits.

## **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the UFS is making a considerable impact in its local communities (compared to other universities) and that it is in the process of realising its engaged scholarship strategy in terms of being a research-led and a regionally relevant university with a focus on development and social justice. The university's impacts also contribute to the UN's SDGs, the SA NDP and AU Agenda 2063 in terms of education and health.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

- That the UFS invests in an up-to-date database where all its engaged activities are documented for future reporting and impact evaluation purposes.
- That the UFS focuses on engaged teaching and learning and less on volunteerism.
- That the UFS works with national and provincial government to strengthen the systems and processes that are needed to help more community members.
- That the UFS involves other disciplines in its intervention in Trompsburg.

## **Introduction**

### **Evaluation context and questions**

It is the vision and mission of the University of the Free State (UFS) to be a "research-led, student-centred and regionally-engaged university that contributes to development and social justice through the production of globally competitive graduates and knowledge".

The university's model for community engagement (CE) encompasses an engaged scholarship approach. This involves an integration of engaged teaching-learning (e.g.

community-based learning, service learning, inter-professional learning, clinical learning, etc.), engaged research (applied, action and participatory research) and engaged citizenship (by its academics and students). These engaged-activities are embedded in well-established and long-term partnerships for mutual learning and service with stakeholders in the services sectors and partner communities. These beneficiaries include government departments, non-governmental organisations, private businesses, industry and social enterprises as well as ordinary community members who are served by these sectors.

As part of the UFS's inputs and support to these beneficiaries (in a direct or indirect manner), the university invests resources and a number of engaged activities on a continual basis in order to produce specific and concrete outputs. It is, however, not known whether these outputs are helping the university to achieve its vision and mission and, even more importantly, if its engaged activities are likely to make the necessary impacts.

Finally, the university currently does not have a holistic picture of the total number and type of engaged-activity outputs that are generated by UFS staff and students (i.e. CE profile) and exactly how its impacts contribute to international and national benchmarks such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN's SDGs), the South African National Government's National Development Plan (SA's NDP) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 goals.

The following questions, therefore, guided the evaluation:

1. What are the number and type of engaged-activity outputs that were produced by the UFS during the evaluation period? (primary question)
2. What are the impacts that resulted from these activities? (primary question)
3. How does the impact align with the UFS's strategy, the UN's SDGs, SA's NDP and the African Union's Agenda 2063 goals? (secondary question)

## **University-community impact evaluation**

All public and most private universities are required to evaluate and report the impacts of their community-engaged activities. As a result, the topic received a lot of research attention in recent years (Hart & Northmore, 2011; Kotosz et al., 2015; Srinivas et al., 2015; Block et al., 2017; Coetzee & Nell, 2018; Llenares & Deocarís, 2018; Shephard et al., 2018; Kochetkov, Sadekov, & Gudkova, 2019; McReynolds, 2019; Coronado, Freijomil-Vazquez, & Fernandez-Basanta, 2020; Dodge & Pawaskar, 2020). In the South African context, for example, evaluations revealed that Stellenbosch University (SU) produced 79 engaged activities that resulted in 127 impacts, Nelson Mandela University (NMU) produced 183 engaged activities

that resulted in 275 impacts (De Lange & Mattheus, 2019) and the North-West University produced 335 engaged activities that resulted in 516 impacts (Coetzee, 2020a).

The most common set of indicators that are used to measure university-community impact, especially in a South African context, is the UN's 17 SDGs. SDG indicators are, however, not suitable for evaluating actual impacts and are primarily used as an indication of how universities are faring in reaching/contributing to the UN's goals. In other words, SDGs are more suitable as a system for relevance or for strategic positioning. This is mainly because they represent different domains (e.g. life below water, life on land, industry and infrastructure) and conceptual issues that cut across different domains (gender equality, good health and well-being) and goals (no poverty, no obstacles) (Alaimo & Maggino, 2020; Kraak, Ricker, & Engelhardt, 2018). Furthermore, the use of SDGs for this purpose is also not based on solid theory. A more reliable set of indicators is, therefore, needed to evaluate university-community impact.

## **University-community impact from a community well-being perspective**

Sirgy et al. (2010) proposed four distinct CWB domains and included a number of sub-domains that can potentially be used to evaluate university-community impact. According to the latter, a holistic evaluation of CWB should include the evaluation of a community's satisfaction with (1) business-related services (opportunities where important goods and services can be obtained); (2) government-related services (public education, health and social services, transportation, protection/law enforcement, housing, recreation, etc.); (3) non-profit-related services (social, cultural and religious activities); and (4) community conditions (crime rate, climate, environmental pollution, quality of jobs and living costs). To evaluate these four domains, they proposed 14 CWB indicators<sup>1</sup>:

- Consumer WB (places where communities can buy necessities or shop)
- Educational WB (availability and quality of schools and teaching-learning)
- Environmental WB (the state and quality of the environment)
- Family and home WB (social relationships with family members and important others)
- Financial WB (income, the ability to survive on what individuals earn, cost of living)
- Health WB (access to health facilities such as clinics, hospitals, healthcare professionals)

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted for the South African context

- Leisure WB (activities and facilities where communities can relax and unwind)
- Neighbourhood WB (the general look and feel of a place, race relations, crime rate)
- Political WB (leadership, the ability to take part in elections or support a political party freely)
- Safety WB (physical safety, feeling safe)
- Social WB (welfare services, the ability to get along with others in their community)
- Spiritual/religious WB (spiritual/religious activities and facilities)
- Transportation WB (the ability to travel, the availability of transport)
- Work WB (employment, general work conditions)

These indicators are all measurable and are theoretically supported by the bottom-up, spill-over theory (Andrews & Withey, 1976). The bottom-up, spill-over theory is a model that indicates the relationship between individual life domains that contribute collectively to quality of life. The theory indicates that quality of life in individual domains has spill-over effects on overall quality of life on an individual as well as community level. According to the theory, life satisfaction is thought to be the pinnacle of a hierarchy of four domains, namely satisfaction with community, family, work, social life and health, etc. Satisfaction with a particular life domain, in turn, is influenced by lower levels of life concerns within that domain. Thus, life satisfaction is mostly determined by evaluations of individual life concerns. The greater the satisfaction with/contribution to individual community services as well as community conditions, the greater the satisfaction with community life will be.

Therefore, if a university (such as the UFS) can show that it contributes directly to these life domains, for example via its engaged activities, it can be surmised that such a contribution should ultimately lead to greater life satisfaction in communities and, by inference, concrete, measurable impacts.

## **Purpose, scope and secondary objective**

This evaluation set out to gauge the impact the UFS's community engaged scholarship portfolio as a whole has from a CWB perspective based on predefined engagement categories (i.e. engaged teaching and learning, engaged research, and engaged citizenship) and to determine who the major contributors to that portfolio are.

A secondary objective (as covered in the discussion section of this report) was to interpret the UFS's findings against / in relation to the UN's SDGs, SA's NDP and the African Union's Agenda 2063 goals.

# **Evaluation methodology**

## **Evaluation logic, design and strategy**

For the UFS to show impact, it (or the evaluator) had to demonstrate that the impacts the UFS claims to make are the direct result of its own planned interventions (i.e. engaged activities) and not accidental (unintended) changes that occur naturally over time or as a result of other factors. This was accomplished by measuring impacts against a theory of change (ToC) and by using a logical frame model (Bakewell & Garbutt, 2005) to show attribution. In this regard, also keep in mind that if there are no inputs, there can be no impact. In addition, to show impact, it is essential that activities convert inputs to outputs and that these outputs are taken up by communities (over the short term) in order to address their needs and to improve their conditions (over the medium term). Only then can impacts be measured by making use of indicators.

To address all of the above, a theoretical-methodological approach (Coetzee, 2020b) was followed, which included an explanatory mixed-methods evaluation design (Huber & Froehlich, 2020) that was used to develop a CE profile for the UFS as institution (based on the number of engaged-activity outputs), a ToC and log-frame model to guide the evaluation and to show attribution (see table 1), and 14 domain-specific indicators of CWB (Sirgy et al., 2010) to measure the impacts that resulted from the UFS's engaged activities.



**Table 1:** Log-frame model used to guide the evaluation and to show attribution

<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Short-term outcomes</b>	<b>Medium-term outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators of impact and data sources</b>
Physical resources  Funding  Staff and student hours	Engaged activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research</li> <li>• T-L</li> <li>• Citizenship</li> </ul>	New knowledge, skills and services received	Uptake of new knowledge and the generation of innovation	Needs addressed  Improved community conditions	14 domain-specific indicators of CWB  Research outputs  List of service-learning modules  PhD and Masters' graduates

## Procedure

The evaluator was approached by the UFS in October 2020 to conduct the evaluation. Various sets of data were then submitted by the university to the evaluator during November 2020. This data was then collated and analysed.

As a next step, fieldwork was conducted between 1 and 3 December 2020 at which time three of the university's flagship projects (i.e. the Bloemshelter and Towers of Hope in Bloemfontein and the Trompsburg project) were visited to gather specific data related to education-, spiritual/religious - and health-related impacts (the three areas where the university made the biggest impacts according to the first round of analysis).

## Data gathering

A purposive data-gathering strategy (Tracy, 2013) was used for the first round of data gathering. As indicators of engaged research outputs, 2017/18 post-graduate data and publications produced by academic staff from 2017 till 2020 in which the keyword 'community' appeared) was used, while a 2017/18 register for engaged teaching and learning and a list of 2019/20 student organisations were used to indicate engaged citizenship. All the data that was received was subsequently collated into a single spreadsheet for analysis.

Unstructured interviews with 13 participants [four from Bloemshelter (female = 4), one from Towers of Hope (male = 1) and eight from the UFS's project in Trompsburg (male = 2;

female = 6)] were conducted one-on-one to gather additional data related to the domain-specific impacts. All participants were purposively selected, based on their direct involvement as key partners/beneficiaries of the UFS's three flagship projects and included direct beneficiaries/ordinary community members, academic and other university staff, a school principal and a local physician.

In all instances, each participant had to respond to a single open-ended question: "Please tell me how, if at all, you benefited from your interactions with the UFS?" A number of follow-up questions were then asked to clarify the evaluator's understanding or to explore some of the responses further. The resultant data was captured systematically on paper.

Additional data was also gathered in the form of field notes based on observations at each of the three projects. This data was used to verify the interview data and to provide important contextual information that was taken into account during the analysis of the data.

## **Data analysis**

In the first round of analysis, the total number of activities (based on the activity names/outputs) was coded quantitatively and used to calculate the total number of activities for all main engagement categories (i.e. engaged teaching and learning, engaged research and engaged citizenship). The totals were then combined to calculate the overall total for the UFS (i.e. the sum of its activities/total engagement portfolio).

In the second round of analysis, the activities were then classified according to the 14 categories of CWB (Sirgy et al., 2010) in order to determine the impact of the university's engaged activities. The end results of these two analyses were then used to generate an engagement and impact profile for the UFS as a whole and for each of the main engagement categories (i.e. those who were the major contributors).

In the third round of analysis, the qualitative data was analysed thematically, following the procedure outlined in Tracy (2013). The captured results were first read multiple times to ensure immersion before they were coded inductively by assigning a brief descriptive label to each segment of text. Based on conceptual similarities, codes were grouped together in categories and according to overarching themes. Categories and themes were then examined for their inter-relationships, and the emerging thematic account of the data was tested against the original data in order to verify that it did, indeed, provide a satisfactory descriptive and explanatory account of the data.

## **Credibility and trustworthiness**

Only available and official data produced by the UFS was used in the evaluation. Four additional strategies were also implemented during the fieldwork phase of the study to increase the general credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative results:

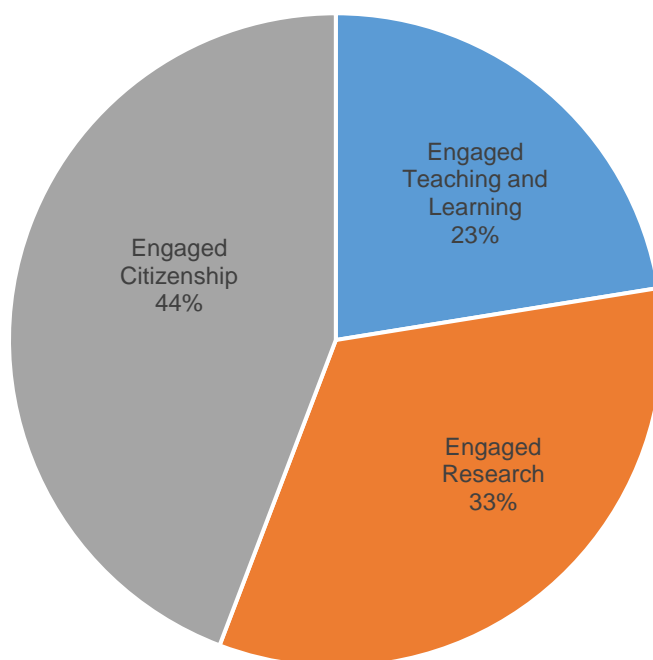
- Firstly, the coordinators of the three flagship projects were used to gain entry into the communities at each of the locations.
- Secondly, an attempt was made to select as diverse a participant group as possible (e.g. one comprised of different genders, ages, ethnic groups, etc.). This helped to ensure the inclusion of multiple perspectives and, according to Tracy (2013), renders the findings more widely transferable to a larger number of contexts beyond the sample used.
- Thirdly, interview data was supplemented with observational data (field notes) in order to verify and contextualise interview data.
- Finally, the data and themes that emerged during the interviews were checked and verified with the participants continuously, a process referred to as “member checking” which, according to Tracy (2013), contributes significantly to the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research findings.

## **Limitations**

The biggest limitation was the fact that the UFS did not have an up-to-date database where all its engagement data is stored. The evaluator therefore had to spend a considerable amount of time to source data for the evaluation.

## **Evaluation results**

Based on the UFS’s institutional strategy, it can be deduced that the UFS’s ToC that guided its engaged activities was to be a “research-led, student-centred and regionally relevant university with a focus on development and social justice”. To realise this ToC, the UFS invested physical resources and funding as well as staff and student hours to initiate the process of converting its inputs to outputs. As illustrated in figure 1, the UFS’s engaged activities that were used in the evaluation process to convert its inputs to outputs resulted in 285 engaged-activity outputs.



**Figure 1:** UFS’s current community engagement profile

The majority of the UFS’s 285 engaged activities constituted engaged citizenship (44%), followed by engaged research (33%), and then engaged teaching and learning (23%).

Viewed in relation to contributing entities (table 2), it is evident from the results that UFS students contributed the most to the university’s CE profile, followed by its faculties of Humanities (FHUM), Health (FHS), Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS), Natural and Agricultural Sciences (FNAS), Education (FEDU), Theology (FTHEO) and Law (FLAW), while the Office of the Dean’s contribution took the form of a service learning opportunity.

**Table 2:** Total number of activities produced by each of the UFS’s contributing entities

Entity	Total activities
Students	126
FHUM	52
FHS	43
FEMS	23
FNAS	20
FEDU	16
FTHEO	3

FLAW	1
Office of the Dean	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>

## The UFS's community impacts

The UFS's outputs resulted in a number of impacts which enabled its communities to address their needs and, in some cases, to also improve their general living conditions. As can be observed in table 3, the UFS's 285 engaged activities resulted in 425 impacts.

**Table 3:** The UFS's total number of impacts per entity

<b>Entities</b>	<b>Total impacts</b>
Students	185
FHS	84
FHUM	60
FEMS	44
FNAS	28
FEDU	16
FTHEO	6
FLAW	1
Office of the Dean	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>

Most of the UFS's impacts were produced by its students, followed by its faculties of Health, Humanities, Economic and Management Sciences, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Education, Theology and Law. On a faculty level, Health Sciences produced the most impacts.

## The UFS's domain-specific areas of impact

A further analysis of the domain-specific indicators of CWB (table 4) shows that the UFS made the biggest impact in the educational WB of communities, followed by an impact on their spiritual/religious WB, health WB, financial WB, leisure WB, neighbourhood WB, political WB, social WB, work WB and environmental WB.

**Table 4:** Domain-specific impacts by the UFS and totals per major engagement category

<b>CWB indicators</b>	<b>Engaged teaching and learning</b>	<b>Engaged research</b>	<b>Engaged citizenship</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Educational WB	64	93	129	286
Spiritual/religious WB	2		49	51
Health WB	29	11	1	41
Financial WB	6	20	4	30
Leisure WB	4		1	5
Neighbourhood WB	4	1	0	5
Political WB	2	1	1	4
Social WB	1	0	0	1
Work WB	0	1	0	1
Environmental WB	0	1	0	1
	112	128	185	425

The UFS made no impacts in the safety WB, family and home WB, consumer WB and transportation WB of its communities during the evaluation period.

Finally, it appears as if engaged citizenship had the most domain-specific impacts, followed by research and then engaged teaching and learning.

### **Specific educational, spiritual/religious and health-related impacts**

A number of themes and sub-themes emerged during the qualitative phase of the evaluation. These include empowerment and upliftment as two general themes that cut across the three flagship projects and a number of health-related themes that are mostly related to the UFS's project in Trompsburg as well as negative feedback and recommendations for improvements that came from participants.

- ***Empowerment – enhanced knowledge base and skills (leading to employment/greater employability):*** Beneficiaries confirmed that UFS students and academic staff visited all three sites (flagship projects) on a regular basis to share their discipline-based knowledge and skills.

Some of the typical interactions with beneficiaries included house visits (especially in the case of the Trompsburg project), special days, counselling and other professional services, a learning festival and regular workshops. Beneficiaries also confirmed that during their interactions with UFS students and staff, health-related knowledge and career guidance as well as specific knowledge and skills such as how to be healthy, first-aid skills, computer skills, life skills, baking skills and entrepreneurial skills were imparted.

During the interviews, it also became evident that many of the beneficiaries are able to apply their new knowledge and skills to improve their livelihoods and, in some cases, even their general living conditions. One of the partners from Bloemshelter, for example, told the evaluator that one of the beneficiaries planned to use her new knowledge and skills to convert second-hand clothes into fashionable items for low-income community members but was subsequently offered a job at a guesthouse in Bloemfontein. It therefore clearly shows that UFS's interventions do not only result in an increased knowledge base, but that this also led to employment. In another case, the evaluator was told that one of the beneficiaries was inspired to focus on a much cherished hobby (jewellery making). In fact, there are many similar stories such as that of a number of learners from a school in Trompsburg who were inspired to obtain tertiary education from a VET college as a direct result of their interactions with UFS students. A number of participants also confirmed that they were able to share their knowledge with/help others in their community or that they are now able to help others in their community more effectively (at two of the three sites). In addition, the UFS's site in Trompsburg led to direct employment because at least five local community members are employed as staff and only local contractors and labourers were/are used during the construction of the site where UFS students and staff are housed. All of these beneficiaries are in the process of acquiring new knowledge and experience that are likely to increase their employability in future further.

- ***Upliftment – increased self-worth, confidence and personal growth***: The changes in their daily circumstances and well-being that many beneficiaries reported also resulted in an increase in self-worth for many beneficiaries. Many of the participants (who often come from a low socio-economic and deprived background) could not believe that they were afforded an opportunity to visit “*a place like a university*”. This, in turn, led to increased confidence and personal growth. Because of this increase in confidence and personal growth, some of the beneficiaries are starting to become ‘knowledge brokers’ in their communities. In other words, as the keepers of this new knowledge, they are now able to assist and support others in their communities.

From the interviews it also became clear that many beneficiaries received a number of direct and indirect health-related benefits. The biggest winners here are most probably diabetic patients who, in addition to receiving advanced knowledge and skills from UFS students and staff, also received a number of other benefits such as:

- **Regular health services:** Many of the beneficiaries commented on how grateful they are for the health services they receive from UFS students. The fact that they are visited regularly by “*doctor students*” enabled them to ask specific questions and helped them to understand and deal with their health challenges. One of the participants, a physician from a large provincial hospital, said that this also helps him a lot because he does not always have the time to support and guide patients on an individual basis.
- **Equipment:** Many beneficiaries received monitoring equipment that they can now use to monitor their own health.

These benefits, in turn, led to:

- **Increased physical health/lifestyle changes and improved quality of life:** Because diabetics are now able to monitor their own health, they are able to keep themselves healthier or to react to setbacks sooner. This was confirmed by at least three beneficiaries (older women from the Trompsburg community) who said: “*We now know our disease better, and because of this we can monitor our own health and look after ourselves and each other better. We now know what to look out for, what to eat and what we should not do.*” This realisation helps many diabetics to stay healthier, make the necessary lifestyle changes and to enjoy a better quality of life.
- **Savings in resources:** Many diabetics indicated that they no longer have to spend as much time at local clinics. This reduces the strain on local government health services in the area and is something that is likely to save time and money for beneficiaries and the government in the long run.
- **Positive relationships leading to greater sense of community and belonging:** The diabetics that form part of the UFS’s Lifestyle Group have become a ‘close-knit family’ that support one another on a daily basis. Their interactions with the university students and each other also give them a greater sense of community, especially a sense of belonging and being accepted. One of the participants put it quite beautifully: “*It is so nice when we are together. We learn from each other, we get along; we even take photographs... together as people. It doesn’t matter your age, gender or race. We are all the same.*”



- **Added benefits:** Beneficiaries who participate in the UFS's Lifestyle Group also receive tokens for every interaction they participate in. With these tokens they can now also access other necessities such as clothes, food and household and educational goods at the 'swop-shop' that is located at the site in Trompsburg.

According to the beneficiaries, it is also not surprising that the UFS's interactions with them led to an increase in their spiritual/religious WB. Many beneficiaries commented on how grateful they are for being afforded the opportunity to open and close their interactions with the university with prayer. Beneficiaries also like the fact that the religious beliefs held by students and staff are not forced on them, but that it is "*something that happens spontaneously*".

A final indirect (but related) consequence of the UFS's involvement in the Trompsburg community is that it led to an increase in economic activities which, for example, resulted in the establishment of various new businesses/employment opportunities in the town of Trompsburg.

## **Negative feedback and recommendations for improvements coming from participants**

At least one participant was, however, not totally satisfied with the recent services provided by UFS students. According to him, "*it is a pity that some of the professional students (such as medical students and other professionals) are starting to focus more on general outreach instead of using their professional discipline-based services to make an impact in the community*". He suggested that the students' interactions with the community be more structured with clear and measurable outcomes that are based on professional services. This participant purports that there are many volunteers who visit the community, but there is a greater need for professional services because of the vulnerable groups such as sex workers, the homeless and street children that he has to deal with.

Another participant confirmed that UFS students are providing very useful screening and referral services, but that he (government) is unable to cope with the increased health needs in the community. This participant recommended that attention be given to the government's capacity to deal with the health-related needs in especially the Trompsburg and surrounding area.

Some of the diabetic elders requested that something small to eat be served at their regular meetings to help stabilise their blood sugar.

## Discussion

In essence, this evaluation set out to gauge the impact the University of the Free State's community-engaged scholarship portfolio as a whole has from a community well-being perspective. It was found that the USF's 285 engaged activities mostly comprised engaged citizenship, followed by research and then teaching and learning, and that these activities and categories resulted in 425 impacts that mostly contributed to the educational WB, spiritual WB and health WB of its communities.

The total number of community-engaged activities produced by UFS is much higher than universities the likes of Stellenbosch University that produced 79 activities during its last evaluation and Nelson Mandela University that produced 183 activities during its last evaluation (De Lange & Mattheus, 2019) but lower than the North-West University 's 335 activities (Coetzee, 2020a). In the case of NMU and NWU, most of the engaged activities also comprised outreach/service delivery, but in both instances, this was followed by teaching and learning and not research. The fact that UFS's second highest category is engaged research may have something to do with its strategy which focuses specifically on research or it may have something to do with the indicators that were used. In the case of NWU, this evaluator did not include PhD and Masters' data. If student graduation data is removed, the UFS's profile is, therefore, very similar to that of the NWU and NMU.

In the evaluation studies conducted by De Lange and Mattheus (2019) and Coetzee (2020a), it was also found that the Faculty of Health Sciences at NMU and NWU is the largest contributor to the respective institutions' impact. In the case of UFS, it is totally understandable why it is making such a large contribution to the health WB of its communities because the institution invested a lot of additional resources to provide health services in Bloemfontein and smaller rural communities in the area.

An interesting finding is that UFS's students are major contributors to the spiritual/religious WB of their communities. This is most probably because of the large number of student religious organisations at UFS but also because Christian beliefs are shared with local community members in a spontaneous manner.

In the case of the UFS, it appears as if engaged citizenship made the most impacts, followed by research and then engaged teaching and learning. This is also similar to what was found at the NWU (Coetzee, 2020a). Again, in the case of the UFS, this can most probably also be attributed to the large number student religious organisations at UFS. If student activities are excluded from UFS's engaged activities, teaching and learning will rank second – which is similar to the pattern found at other universities.

The fact that the UFS made no impacts in the safety WB, family and home WB, consumer WB and transportation WB of its communities during the evaluation period should be interpreted with caution because of the challenges related to the availability of data. The evaluator only learned afterwards that the UFS's partnership with TATA actually focuses specifically on transport.

The study did show that the UFS contributed the most to the educational WB (ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in this study) and health WB (ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in this study) of its communities. This is also similar to what was found at other universities (De Lange & Mattheus, 2019; Coetzee, 2020a). It therefore also clearly demonstrates that the UFS and other universities are supporting the National Government in their efforts to provide services to local communities.

To explore this further, an attempt was made to establish whether the UFS's impacts also contributed to the SDGs, the SA Government's NDP and the goals of the African Union's Agenda 2063 by grouping said impacts according to these goals in table 5 below.

**Table 5:** Contribution of the UFS towards attaining SDGs, NDP and Agenda 2063 goals

<b>UFS domain-specific impacts</b>	<b>SDGs</b>	<b>NDP</b>	<b>Agenda 2063 Goals</b>
Educational WB	Goal 4	Education	"Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation"
Health WB	Goal 3	Health	"Healthy and well-nourished citizens"

Based on this grouping, the UFS made the biggest contribution towards attaining SDG 3 and 4, two of the goals espoused in the SA Government's NDP (education and health) and Agenda 2063's goals to ensure "well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation" and "healthy and well-nourished citizens".

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that the UFS is making a considerable impact in its local communities (compared to other universities) and that it is in the process of realising its engaged scholarship strategy in terms of being a research-led and a regionally relevant university with

a focus on development and social justice. The university's impacts also contribute to the UN's SDGs, the SA NDP and AU Agenda 2063 in terms of education and health.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

- That the UFS invests in an up-to-date database where all its engaged activities are documented for future reporting and impact evaluation purposes.
- That the UFS focuses on engaged teaching and learning and less on volunteerism.
- That the UFS works with national and provincial government to strengthen the systems and processes that are needed to help more community members.
- That the UFS involves other disciplines in its intervention in Trompsburg.

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