Some Feedback from Current Students working with Community Partners

"Challenge of leaving your own preconceived ideas at the door."
Elretha Bartlett, 2014 Psychology Honours

"Successful people are always looking for opportunities to help others. Unsuccessful people are always asking 'What's in it for me?'"
Carla Espost, 2014 Media Studies Masters

"Unless one works with individuals from different communities, the challenges experienced by NGOs to uplift low-income areas, and their attempts to overcome them, can't be understood. I am now more socially-aware, and have learnt how to look at situations more analytically from different perspectives."
Michaella Allen, 2013 Rapid Research intern

"There is a practical element of seeing how your work can help the community and how the community can help you and a chance to step out of your bubble."
Prianka Parusnath, 2014 Speech Therapy Masters

Working across the boundary between academia and community can be really exciting and rewarding.

If you need any support along the way, do contact us!!

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UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP
Facilitating community partnerships with UCT

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Working with Community Partners

A brief introduction to a few important aspects of working with community partners, outlining some of what you can expect and what is expected of you.

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Making a difference in the broader community adds value to your experience as a UCT student in many fulfilling ways.

The **UCT Knowledge Co-Op** is proud to play a key role in facilitating these mutually beneficial relationships between students and community partners, and we look forward to helping you pair up with a project you feel passionate about!

Working with a Community Partner gives you an opportunity to:

Apply your academic knowledge to real world issues and gain valuable experience.

Receive feedback from outside of UCT, as community partners often have valuable practical expertise in the subject or problem you are investigating.

Engage in learning experiences outside of the classroom that allow you to interact with people from various backgrounds, and solve real world problems that make a difference to society.

Gain confidence and attain new skills through applying what you know to a community problem. This has the ability to boost your self-confidence and positively shape your future choices.

Network and form relationships with community groups and other UCT partners, and this may also lead to establishing lasting friendships.

Guidelines for a mutually beneficial interaction with a Community Partner

Future Collaborations: Your relationship with a community partner should be built on and maintained through **respect and communication**, so as to encourage future collaborations.

Mutual Learning: Community based projects are a platform for the **exchange of ideas** and expertise between the community partners and university partners.

Deliverables & Expectations: Objectives and deliverables are established at the start of a project. The **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** serves as an agreement between university partners and community partners. This clarifies the project objectives and helps avoid undeliverable expectations.

Ethics and Confidentiality: When working with a community partner, many projects are confidential in nature, and you are obliged to keep to **ethical practices regarding anonymity and privacy.** Ethics clearance from the university is required when needed, to protect both you and the community partner.

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Potential challenges and considerations

Critical Engagement: To make the most of your interaction with a community partner, it may be of benefit to take some time to better understand the social, economic, linguistic and cultural diversity that you are being exposed to. Engaging with a community, especially one less fortunate than you, is often a moving experience.

Language barriers: It is very important to be aware that English is not a first language for most South Africans. Patience and consideration is often essential when communicating with various community partners and making the project a success.

Time Management: Juggling your academic workload and your commitments to the community partner can be tricky. It may help to keep notes of your academic requirements as well as the objectives summarised in your MoU for the community project you are working with. Also consider the travelling time and modes of transport you will be using to get to your community partner, and factor these into your time management plan.