

Engagement with communities and civic responsibility

What would be great is...

A clearly implemented strategy to create active dialogues between HEIs and others for their mutual benefit.

Community and civic engagement (CCE) activities do exist, but they tend to be interpreted in different ways and are not always strategic, or linked to operational objectives. This means that the benefits of a university, its contribution to its community and a socially inclusive society can be missed.

Here are some suggestions to maximise HEIs public contribution to lifelong learning.

What is needed?

We need community and civic engagement to be embedded within institutional strategy, and given status, like an agreed social contract.

We need HEIs to encourage the active participation of students, academic staff or the HEI as a whole in actions (such as service learning or citizenship skill development) related to the public good and social cohesion, through the development of appropriate competences, skills and values.

We need HEIs and other stakeholders to consider, explore and develop the important roles they play regionally as hubs of innovation and opportunity creation and should consider targeting CCE opportunities to specific local groups.

We need to know more about the social impact of HEIs, and to explore a framework and methodology that facilitates social impact measurement, from both a quantitative and qualitative point of view.

We need to know how CCE is perceived by targets groups, HEIs, local organisations and policy makers. This work needs to recognise the HE agenda of internationalism, whilst ensuring that localism is not neglected.

